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MORE FIRST NIGHTS

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RACHEL

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Autobiography

EGO

EGO 2



*Caricature
By John Allen*

E G O 3

*BEING STILL MORE OF
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF
JAMES AGATE*

" Really, James, you are becoming
a megalegomaniac! "

JOCK



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UNLIKE CALIGULA,
I CANNOT MAKE MY HORSE
EGO
A CONSUL;
BUT I CAN
DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO HIM,
AND I DO

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1936

Aug. 9 Dublin. As the train steamed slowly through *Sunday*. Chester station on Friday morning last the sun began to shine for almost the first time in this woebegone summer. Monty Shearman had never been to Ireland, and I was coming over for the Horse Show. (A footnote to *Ego 2* records yesterday's triumph and the winning of the championship by my little horse.) While I inspected the show-ground M. explored Trinity College and Phoenix Park. He is full of the Georgian architecture of Dublin and its pictures, incidentally bores me to the homicidal verge, and behaves generally like Shakespeare's "picked man of countries." Once when I am thinking about a plan of campaign for *Ego*—the horse, not the book—and obviously not attending to Monty, he has a "Look, how our partner's rapt," which makes me forgive his interminable aesthetics.

Lunched, to annoy my old friend, off lobster and Sparkling Burgundy, and felt quite well afterwards. He woke me up about four and insisted on our driving to Glendalough. Very fine, including a fifth-century graveyard where the contrast between the stones and a French officer and his mystically scented, exotically taloned *petite amie* set me Sparkenbroking—ecstasy about death and all that nonsense. After dinner began *Ego 8* in the hotel writing-room, which I had to desert in a hurry owing to a priest being sick.

Aug. 10 This is a land of Autolycuses. Monty put down *Monday*. his spectacles, and they were at once picked up. I left my best stick, the gift of George Mair, in the hotel cloakroom and never saw it again. The odd thing was that during the night of its disappearance I kept on

dreaming about the stick. And the man who eats at the next table has had his horse stolen. But the charm excuses the dishonesty; one reads this nation's poverty in its smiling eyes.

Aug. 12 Newcastle, Co. Down. On getting in yesterday
Wednesday. afternoon we at once had a round on the links, which I remember from twenty-eight years ago as being absolutely first-class. The 13th, where thirty years ago I holed a brassie shot from among the stones, is now a velvet paradise, and the 9th, where once I nearly holed out from the tee, is now a fine two- or even three-shotter. My golf, alas, is falling into the scree; I shan't mind if I can keep it out of the yellow! But the ball doesn't go as far as it used to, and I can see that I shall have to putt very well to break 85. Still, I agree with Monty that two elderly gentlemen, if they take it quietly, can get a lot of fun out of the game. M. said this with the perspiration streaming down his face, and his chin just showing over the edge of a sixty-foot precipice some two hundred yards off the line. It is only fair to state that M.S., in receipt of 11 strokes and 1 bisque—a complicated system of handicapping in vogue among Civil Servants—beat J.A. this afternoon by seven up and six to play.

Aug. 14 The death of Harry Preston, though expected, is
Friday. still a shock, for I had got very fond of the little man during the last few years. He would fall back on me whenever he came up to town unexpectedly and found himself without somebody to lunch with. At almost the last big dinner he attended, a motoring affair, I made his speech for him, as he wasn't feeling up to it. The 500 guests didn't know who I was or want to hear me, and I got out of it by talking entirely about H.P. and saying that, whatever buildings Brighton might pull down and reconstruct, it would never demolish H.P.'s memory or build another man to replace him.

In appearance Harry was exactly like a baby elephant; the very folds of his skin were pachydermatous. I think it

was James Gunn who first discovered this, at the time he was painting him. For his own protection Harry put on an impenetrable armour of *fausse bonhomie*, which to him was what his part is to an actor. Without it he must have succumbed to the assaults of all the bores who had ever spent a night at his hotel. To his real friends he was sincerity itself. He had a quality which has become very rare. He was *merry*, and his laugh had a real tinkle. Early this year he told me that the end might come at any time and that he was ready. After which he crossed the floor to take out Lady Preston in the Blue Danube, which, he said, he had danced with her every night for thirty-nine years.

Aug. 15 M. insisting on returning *via* Stranraer, we *Saturday*. spent yesterday in Belfast, whose beauties refuse themselves to the casual visitor. While Dublin is obviously a capital, though a seedy and impoverished one, Belfast is mean and provincial. Too many of its shops are branches of well-known London emporiums, the whole place is depressing, and the note is a dull opinionativeness. The things which struck me most were the number of swans and newsboys, the out-of-the-wayness of the obviously unwanted Parliament House, and the age of the taxi-cabs. The one in which we made the tour of the city was fusty with old leather, smelling of all the funerals I have ever attended. Intellectually the place is as backward as Spain. The R.C.'s insisting upon putting up a church in the middle of a Protestant slum, the devil's own disturbances are created, stones thrown, and the neighbourhood's lamp-posts decorated with Union Jacks.

My night was sleepless, owing to a bed concave in all directions like a dish-cover. Also, hotel much too hot. I never left any place with so good a will, and Monty agrees. If ever we visit Ireland again we shall give Belfast a miss. Its petty ugliness is revolting.

Aug. 16 Postcard from my secretary, Alan Dent, who is on *Sunday*. holiday in Amsterdam :

DEAR JAAMS,

I think u would not mooch like this place. It is ver wicked but also ver dirty. It suits me well because I am ver mooch both.

Your—JOEK

Aug. 17 I shall never be a really *first-class* critic owing to Monday. my inability to wrap things up. I must blurt them out. This morning I cut the following out of Neville Cardus's *Manchester Guardian* notice about Henry Lytton :

Old men with long memories have been known to maintain that Lytton was not as great a comic actor in the Savoy operas as Grossmith was, or George Thorne. The truth is that Lytton could never be estimated purely and simply as an actor. There was indeed a touch about him of the inspired amateur; that is to say, he usually seemed able to win his audience without the help of the tricks of the footlights. On or off the stage he was the least theatrical of men; his art was indeed nothing but his nature. . . . In private life Lytton was very much as he was on the stage—he required only to dress himself for his parts and ‘taste’ them rather than present them in the technical gadgets of the theatre. In Jack Point he did, to some length, emulate a definitely histrionic art, and in the death scene his own personality was submerged by an emotional current of no little strength. Yet even here the expression was naïve, not of the green-room’s sophisticated texture. The great thing about Lytton was that you loved him first and then, by taking thought, admired the very absence of those technical adornments which are three parts of the equipment of most comic actors.

The truth is that Lytton was a poor actor; in my view he could not hold a candle to C. H. Workman, who played his parts in the provinces. Ernest Fenton, who was with him in *The Princess of Kensington*, *The Earl and the Girl*, and *The Talk of the Town*, said yesterday, “Lytton was like some small, prehistoric bird hopping about the stage. He did it all by a catch in the voice, which he used for the humorous, the amorous, and the pathetic. This trick was

always the same and pleased the audience, which knew exactly what to expect."

By the oddest chance, and going into the Savage Club about eleven o'clock to-night, I met Cardus.

J.A. Look here, Cardus. What would happen to a batsman who lacked those technical adornments which are three parts of the equipment of most cricketers?

N.C. Bowled all over his bloody wicket, old boy!

Aug. 19 Blackpool with Fenton.

Wednesday. The hotel we are staying at is all that Monty and his highbrow friends dislike. The furniture is upholstered in strawberry velvet which sticks to your clothes as you navigate between the armchairs and the octagonal tables. *But* the chairs are comfortable, and there is always something to put things down on. Magenta vases surmount terra-cotta pedestals. *But* their plain nonsensicality rests the mind, whereas M.'s latest purchase—a surrealist painting of a whale disporting itself in a feather-bed—arrests the attention and sets the mind working again, which is just what I don't want on a holiday. There is an unblushing bay-window in the drawing-room which defies M.'s law that all windows must be Georgian. *But* it gives a grand view up and down the promenade, and takes you one yard nearer the sea. In other words, the hotel lives up to its telegraphic address, which is "Comfort," and my heart goes out to the old girl from Lancashire who comes into the room as I am writing and says, "It's a fair treat to set yersen down on summat as isna moving!"

Aug. 20 Cochran is staying here for the first week of his
Thursday. new production, *Laughter in Court*. Took him and Evelyn to lunch at the Majestic, St Anne's, which turns out to be more Ritzzy than the Ritz. Yesterday they went to Morecambe, where they demanded shrimps. "Not only," said Charles, "did the waiter refuse to serve them; he denied their existence!" Evelyn was in specially good form and uttered something like an aphorism when she said, "Rumour in nine cases out of ten starts with

a damned good lie!" On the way back we chattered about our ailments, and I mentioned asthma. It is exactly a month since I tried the new Riddell treatment. They tell you to do it four times a day. I have used it *once* a day, before getting into bed, with the result that the small attaché-cases of remedies, *without which I do not move one yard*, has remained closed. Also I have not smoked an asthma cigarette. C.B., hearing this, pricked up his ears. Would I go to supper at the Metropole to-night and bring the apparatus, as John Hastings Turner, who is a chronic sufferer, had had a very bad attack the previous night, and feared another one? So I went, and found J.H.T. perfectly well. Suddenly, in the middle of supper, he had an attack so violent that it terrified us all; I have never had or seen anything like it. This was where I was supposed to come in, and I felt like a conjurer who isn't sure of his trick. However, I got John up to C.B.'s sitting-room and gave him a full dose of the stuff. In less than a minute he was breathing like an infant! To be perfectly honest, he said that the asthma didn't quite go, but that his breathing had returned to its normal best. I wonder if Dr Johnson, in the shades, knows that Man has now not only invented something to mount higher than the balloon, but also discovered "the means to ease an asthma."

Aug. 23 George Mathew arrived last night. Golf at Lytham Sunday. and St Anne's in the morning with young

Rawstron, who has greatly improved. He has not missed a holeable putt—up to 9 feet—since Thursday morning! I find I can always get *one* half of the course in 89. But the two halves, alas, don't fit! Receiving 9 strokes, my tally of matches with Rawstron for last week is 1 win, 8 defeats, 1 halved match. This last had a grand finish. The 16th on this course is a most fascinating hole, especially with a following wind. You *must* place your drive on the left, for then the hole opens up beautifully. The least suspicion of slice and you are faced with a series of crevasses, the last of which bites into the green. With the wind behind, no

niblick play of mine can carry the lot and stop. I was all square here and played a beautiful spoon shot, for safety, short, but well to the left. A full plonk with my big mashie left me four yards from the pin. In the meantime the boy had hit a terrific drive, but with a hint of cut right into the chain of bunkers. He got out with a marvellous shot which pitched on the very rim of green and crevasse, wavered, and rolled to the pin stone-dead. One down! At the seventeenth I saved my bacon with the last of my strokes and the best brassie shot I have ever hit or shall hit. That was all square, and as neither of us could get a three at the last hole we went in all square. I have not sunk a putt since I arrived. That admirable caddie Joe Hodgson keeps saying, "Left lip!" and always my eye wants to borrow from the right. I believe that you must be able to see the line for yourself, and that putting *against* your eye must always fail. Hudibras's

He that complies against his will
Is of his own opinion still

holds true of golf.

In the evening drove George to Southport, where he went to see friends, and I dined with Edgar Henriques and his wife at their trophy-laden house. She is something of an invalid, and her courage, wit, and high spirits are a constant rebuke to those of us who have more or less good health. The Henriques and I are curiously *liés*. George Lancaster, their stud manager, had his first job with me and managed my little lot from 1910 till 1915, when we both joined up. They bought their first pony mare from me. This was Rusper Maryan, with which as a three-year-old I won the London Hackney Show at the first time of asking. Then they had from me the lovely little stallion Vortex. I begged and implored them not to alter the little chap. But they did, and the breed lost one of the greatest of pony stallions. Vortex had six mares and got six foals. These were Rainbow, sold to America for £3000, the highest price ever paid for a pony; Storm, the fashionable sire; Zephyr and Golden Rain, the world-famous pony pair and tandem; Tempest, one of a pair

sold for £750; and her mate, being her half-sister by Vortex out of Olive Melbourne. I saw Vortex at Offley Ley less than a month ago, and though the little chap's legs are a bit gone he still has the exquisite front and the delicious pony character.

Coming back in the car, George and I talked about the Blackpudlians, and agreed that the outstanding feature of the working-classes is their self-containment. They don't want the things the rich want—travel, clothes, jewels, expensive food and wines, grand opera, and hand-painted pictures. They prefer Blackpool to Biarritz, cloth caps to Ascot toppers, beer to champagne. Their notion of music and pictures is Gracie Fields, and their idea of a racehorse is something not to own, but to bet on. If they have money it must be spent among their own people. "What's the fun of being a married woman among women who are really married?" asked Paula Tanqueray. What's the fun of spending money among people who always have it to spend? is equally incontestable.

The rest of my holiday is a tale of golf with young Rawstron over three courses—Lytham and St Anne's, Fairhaven (very charming), and the unbelievably magnificent Birkdale course. This is golf in all the unrelenting grandeur of the game. The Boys' Championship is playing here, and the course is in superb order. At the long 12th to-day we had to drive into a fairway covered with hundreds of seagulls, and in the excitement of putting for a three I did not think of Tchekhov's play! Starting with a 6, I struck the best patch I have had for years, and with the help of four threes got round in an honest 82. And I don't mind saying that on this course this is pretty good for a nervous wreck tottering on the verge of 59.

Yesterday I motored to Windermere to see Brook Aspland, my oldest friend, now renewing his youth in his grandchildren. Sara, aged 9, coolly remarked, "When I get to the marrying age I shall just hire a man, get a baby, and live in peace." And I was shown this poem, the work of Beatrice, aged eleven and a half:

A WARSONG OF THE HUNS

O Rome it is three leagues off yet,
 But we'll get there ere the sun doth set!
 There will be a dreadful fight,
 Perhaps by day, perhaps by night!
 Blood and gore
 For evermore!

We'll dip our hands in Roman blood,
 As they lie sweltering in the mud!
 Instead of horseflesh we will eat
 The Romans' raw and bleeding meat!
 Blood and gore
 For evermore!

We'll march away and shout hurray
 For we'll have won the war to-day!
 For triumph we will eat for joy
 A very young and tender boy!
 Blood and gore
 For evermore!

Aug. 30 Here is a paragraph from Rebecca West's article
Sunday. in to-day's *S.T.* on the latest Brontë book:

If Emily looked blankly past the curates it was because her spirit was keeping a tryst with Heathcliff. There was a dignity in her which would keep her from being responsible for any such tableau as quaint as that which Monsieur Héger presents throughout the ages, looking downward from the branches of a tall tree, waiting till the implacable little tigress-governess should go home and he can come down and return to his undistinguished hearth. But she never does go home. Immortality has seen to that. He is eternally treed, eternally entirely in the right and entirely ridiculous.

What a joy this woman is!

Aug. 31 Back to work. I wonder whether the grindstone
Monday. ever says, "What? That old nose again!"

Sept. 1 A great occasion to-day, nothing less than the
Tuesday. luncheon given by Jock to celebrate the tenth anniversary of his arrival on my doorstep. It

took place at Rules, where it appears I first asked Jock to lunch. A. D. Peters, now for many years my literary agent, sheet anchor, and firm friend, was there on that early occasion, and we recalled how, with a twinkle in his eye, he put Jock through his matriculation for journalism, and ploughed him. Did Jock know when the Incas flourished? What was reformed by the Reform Bill? Whose Derby was won in a snowstorm? Poor Jock, who was brimming over with knowledge about Beddoes, Björnson, and Brahms, was totally stumped. Jock reminded me that when the bill came on that day ten years ago I borrowed the money from Peters, and I rather hoped that to complete the pattern he would do the same! The fourth at to-day's party was Gerald Barry, in 1926 editor of the *Saturday Review*. It was Gerald who printed Jock's first article. J. did us magnificently to-day. The year of the champagne was, of course, the year of the original banquet. During the luncheon Gerald made the formal offer to Jock of the post of dramatic critic to the *News Chronicle*. J., who has been considering this for some weeks, turned the offer down, preferring to go on with the *M.G.* and our partnership. In this he rose superior to Mrs Micawber, who, after all, was never put to the test! And if ever Jock were to boast too much about Mrs Micawber not deserting Mr Micawber I am always ready with the latter's "My dear, I am not conscious that you are expected to do anything of the sort." All the same, I never know which to admire most about J.—his devotion or his wit. Wherever it is that I have got, I might or might not have got there without Jock; even by myself I've got a fair amount of persistence, and, after all, I worried through the first eight years of my journalistic life alone. But since the day he joined me his golden mind has been a continual stimulation. Not the least of his usefulness is that he is an enormous time-saver. I don't have to waste hours looking for a line in Cowley when Jock can tell me where to find it in Crashaw.

After lunch, for which I had been twenty minutes late, though with entirely valid excuses, we went home to work. When I woke up I found Jock had composed this poem :

To J.A.
GREETINGS IN CHINESE VERSE
By JOCK,
LONG KEPT WAITING

In your cortège
The coffin will come
A long way after the other coaches.
And you will keep
The mourners waiting for you
Impatiently
In the rain.

Sept. 8 Just back from Bergner in the *As You Like It* Thursday. film. The difficulty with Bergner's Rosalind is that Shakespeare's heroine is a *grande dame* in the exquisite making, whereas Bergner plays her as an exquisite *gamine*. Rosalind must always be very much mistress of herself and the situation. The link, through Jane Austen's women, between Rosalind and Clara Middleton I take to be a certain highness of mettle. Rosalind is intensely patrician, and this is one of the qualities Bergner simply hasn't got. Rosalind dominates circumstances, whereas the point about Bergner is her capacity to wilt under their stress. The latter's waifs and strays blurt out this and that, speaking continually out of a heart swollen to bursting point. Rosalind weighs her emotions carefully, and parcels them out in rich words. Bergner's Rosalind at sixty will be a sonsy German *Hausfrau*; Shakespeare's heroine at the same age will be another Lady Bracknell and a very formidable dragon indeed. Consider the high-handedness of Rosalind's rebuke to Phebe. Is it conceivable that within a few minutes of this well-bred scorn Rosalind should be turning cartwheels?

Throughout the film I am nowhere conscious of establishing contact with Shakespeare's Rosalind. Something else is substituted—something German and *gemütlich*, nearer to Wagner's Eva than to Molière's Célimène. This Rosalindchen has, it needn't be said, considerable charm. She has any amount of tenderness and gaiety. But both of these are artless, as in the Gemma Jones play, whereas my ideal

Rosalind does not utter a single word of whose value she is unconscious.

There is one line in the film which, if there is anything in the word 'montage,' should immediately be cut. This is the line "Pray you, no more of this; 'tis like the howling of Irish wolves against the moon!" Rosalind's English should be the best in the world, and the long 'o' in 'wolves' and 'moon' sounds like a parody of Bergner's accent. Similarly with "my uncle's foo-ool." "Unser Shakespcare" is a good German joke. But I can't believe that Shakespeare created a character called "Unsere Rosalind."

Sept. 4 George Mathew and I have just returned from a Friday. performance of *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* at the Talza Theatre, Southend, by the local repertory company. I rather wondered why Aubrey's valet, one Morse, didn't brush his master's clothes—in Pinero's day that would have been part of the Morse code—but the rest of the production and playing were much better than we expected. There is a tremendous lot of life in the old thing yet, and it is no condemnation to object that, in a version rewritten by Evelyn Waugh, Ellean would look upon the old Paula-Ardale affair as quite too amusing. All the same I confess to wishing Paula would round on Aubrey and say, "When I was Ellean's age! How dare you suggest that at any age I was in the least like that odious little prig!" To be honest, I enjoyed the old play more than I do nine out of ten new plays. Yet I suppose that Pinero is dead beyond revival, except for the old fogeys who remember the plays as they came out. Well, I have seen many great writers of more things than plays die in my time. George Meredith, Henry James, Swinburne, William Morris, Mark Twain, Anatole France, Paul Bourget. Balzac was dead to the French before I started to read him, and so were the Goncourts. On the other hand, the cinema has kept Victor Hugo alive.

Sept. 5 Neville Cardus told Jock of a momentous Saturday. occasion when he was on the mat before C. P. Scott for using the phrase "from whence." He

pleaded that precedents were to be found in Smollett and Fielding. Scott said, "Neither Mr Smollett nor Mr Fielding would have used it twice in my paper."

Sept. 6 Sunday. Exhibition match at Thorpe Hall. In the morning Padgham and E. R. Whitcombe whacked the heads off Adams and Denny, the last of whom was fresh from his 66 in the *News of the World* qualifying round at Frinton. I noticed that at the last hole, 210 yards long, all four indulged in the pitiful ambition of taking iron clubs off the tee. All were short and struggling for threes, whereas last night a miserable amateur with the sense to take wood was past the pin and putting for a two. The course is 6000 yards long, and a prize was offered for whoever should break Abe Mitchell's record of 69. Denny, out in 82, looked well set when he hooked his drive to the 11th, and, in trying to pull round a tree, hit it. I know that tree! The hole cost him 6, and at the 18th, a hole he invariably does against me in 2, he three-putted, after which nothing would go right. He finished in 69. The course was in grand condition, the greens being fast and true, yet velvety enough to hold the high-pitched shot. The four caddies singled out for the honour of carrying for the great men had obviously been "barbered three times o'er," and turned up in clothes one did not suspect them of possessing.

Sept. 28 Wednesday. Malibran died one hundred years ago to-day at the age of twenty-eight, and I have been delving into old issues of the *Manchester Guardian* for a detailed account of the extraordinary circumstances surrounding her death. My special interest in the great singer is explained in *Ego* (Chapter II).¹ Manchester in 1836 was, next to London, the most musical city in England, and the scene of the tragic event was its Grand Musical

¹ "The story of me and mine is bound up with those old names . . . Malibran . . . Garcia . . . Rachel. Malibran, dying ninety-eight years ago, came into my world when, at my father's dinner-table, I first heard her nephew speak of her. Pauline Garcia gave my sister her first lesson in diction. Rachel is the subject of my best and simplest piece of writing."

Festival. The artists engaged for this included, as well as Malibran, Caradori, Clara Novello, Braham, Lablache, and Malibran's second husband, de Bériot, the famous violinist and composer. Maria's first husband, Malibran, was an elderly millionaire merchant whom she met in America, and who almost immediately turned out to be not a millionaire at all. Wherefore they separated.

The conductor of the Festival was Sir George Smart, and the band and chorus numbered nearly four hundred performers. The concerts were held in the mornings at the Collegiate Church, now the Cathedral, and in the evenings at the Theatre Royal. The programme was to include Haydn's *The Creation*, parts of Handel's *Solomon* and *Israel in Egypt*, the whole of *The Messiah*, Beethoven's *The Mount of Olives*, and Spohr's *The Last Judgment*, besides several miscellaneous concerts. The *Manchester Guardian* had a long preliminary article containing a defence of the old composers against the innovations of one Herr Neukomm, who appears to have been the Béla Bartók of his day :

This is an inventive, a mechanical age, in music as well as in everything else. Had the immortal Handel been in possession of the resources of modern art in instrumentation; had the equally immortal Haydn had to compose for the practical skill attained since his day, short ago as it is, we can have no doubt that the compositions of both would have been equally distinguished with those of Weber and his imitators, or of the ingenious and recherché Neukomm. . . .

Before the Festival began many special constables were drafted as a precaution against an invasion of London rogues and cracksmen. At the first performance "vehicles filled with elegantly dressed company were rolling in every direction towards the grand focus of attraction." This suggests that Manchester a hundred years ago and Glyndebourne to-day are not as far apart as the casual observer might imagine !

The fatal note is sounded in the account of the first morning concert :

In the next air, "Holy, Holy" from Handel's *Redemption*, Madame Malibran was introduced for the first time. She was, we regret to say, indisposed, having had a fainting fit a short time previously to the commencement of her song. It nevertheless appeared to give great satisfaction to the audience. She sang with great feeling, but under evident deprivation of a portion of her powers. . . . In Cimarosa's Recitative and Air ("Deh Parlate") Malibran appeared in some measure to have recovered her powers. She sang with extreme feeling, combined with peculiar lightness and delicacy. It was on the whole a most gratifying performance.

At the evening concert the programme included Haydn's *Drum-roll Symphony*, Beethoven's *Fidelio* overture, Weber's *Oberon* overture, de Bériot in one of his own violin concertos, many duos, trios, romances, and the sextet (*Sola, sola*) from *Don Giovanni*. Of a duo from *William Tell* we read :

The comic duet by Ivanoff and Lablache was well sung by both performers : certainly admirably by Lablache, and from the solo parts which Ivanoff had to sing, and which *could* be heard, we ventured to presume that those in which he was accompanied by Lablache were equally well sung if they had been audible ; but he might almost as well have joined in a duet with the cataract of Niagara as with his formidable associate. The accompaniments of this duet, from some cause which we could not discover, broke down entirely ; and Signor Lablache might be said to have the affair almost entirely to himself.

At this concert Malibran appears to have fully recovered her powers :

When Madame Malibran presented herself to sing Mozart's Recitative and Air (from *La Clemenza di Tito*), she was greeted with plaudits which clearly showed the estimation in which this queen of song is held by a Manchester audience. Notwithstanding the indisposition under which she had recently been labouring, her singing both of the recitative and the air was truly exquisite, and removed all doubt as to the improvement which has taken place in her voice and style of singing within the last few

years. The union of surpassing delicacy and grace with the most faultless intonation, and a distinctness of articulation, both musical and verbal, which falls to the lot of few singers, made this piece a perfect gem.

All this was on Tuesday, September 13th.

Next morning in the church Malibran sang an air by Pergolesi :

Nothing more magnificent could be conceived, even from this accomplished singer. The rich tones of her voice pervaded the entire church with mellifluous fullness. At the conclusion murmurs of applause, without a possibility of restraining them, burst spontaneously from the auditory, a compliment which was justly her due.

At this point in the Festival there seems to have arisen what one can only call the competitive spirit. It appears to have begun with Braham of "Death of Nelson" celebrity :

The demon of exaggeration again possessed Mr Braham (in *Israel in Egypt*). Such shouting was never heard before, either within or without the walls of a church. . . . He terminated in a totally different key from that intended by the composer and written in his part. Malibran, on the contrary, in her recitative in answer, "Sing ye to the Lord," although her voice was thrown out with prodigious strength, and with animation inconceivable, did not deviate a hair's breadth from the true pitch. It was a most superb effort.

The Wednesday evening concert in the theatre had a terrific programme, put together presumably on the principle that there should be something for every taste. It was like a Saturday Promenade gone mad. Here are the items, performed in this order :

A Symphony in D	Mozart
Air : "She Wore a Wreath of Roses"	Knight
Duet : "Là ci darem"	Mozart
A 'Cello Concerto by Mr Lindley played by	Mr Lindley

A Quartet from <i>Fidelio</i> (with Malibran) .	Beethoven
Air: "Rose Softly Blooming" . . .	Spohr
Overture: <i>William Tell</i>	Rossini
Air: "Lo, here the Gentle Lark" (with flute)	Bishop
Air: "Non più andrai"	Mozart
A Quintet from <i>Così fan Tutte</i> . .	Mozart
A Septet for Wind Instruments . .	Neukomm
A Duet from <i>Il Matrimonio Segreto</i> .	Cimarosa
A Violin Concerto by de Bériot played by	de Bériot
Overture: <i>Euryanthe</i>	Weber

And this takes no account of various other arias, duettos, terzettos!

And now the tragedy begins:

Mercadante's Duetto ("Vanne, se alberghi in petto"), by Mesdames Caradori and Malibran, was decidedly the most marked feature of the evening's performance, and excited an extraordinary sensation. A powerful feeling of emulation seemed to pervade both ladies, and the efforts of each were met by a corresponding exertion on the part of her rival—for rivals in a (we hope, friendly) contest for public admiration, they certainly were. We have never heard Caradori to half so much advantage, and have formed a much higher opinion of that lady's capabilities from her singing on this occasion than we before felt disposed to entertain. She sang passages of excessive difficulty with extreme brilliancy and power, while the full, rich tones of Malibran's voice were heard in replication, in strains of equal intricacy. . . .

After "Non più andrai," which was sung by Lablache, the account continues:

At this period of the performance it was announced to the audience that Madame Malibran was much indisposed (in consequence of her great exertions, we presume, in the Duetto), and their indulgence was solicited to a change rendered imperative by her absence. The request was good-humouredly acceded to, and the concert proceeded.

At the end of the concert Malibran was "bled immediately," and conveyed to her hotel, the Mosley Arms, where she was attended by three doctors. Further engagements for the week were at once cancelled, and nine days later Malibran was dead.

Now comes something which nobody has ever been able to understand. I give the facts as they were presented in the *Manchester Guardian* in the issue for Saturday, September 24th, 1836 :

From the commencement of her illness Monsieur de Bériot has scarcely left the sufferer for an instant, excepting when engaged in the performances of the festival ; and every one who has had an opportunity of witnessing his affectionate solicitude, his trembling anxiety, his tears of anguish at beholding the prostrated strength and pitiable condition of a wife upon whom he is said to have doted to distraction—speaks of him as one of the most devotedly attached husbands. Want of rest and anxiety have very much affected him, and serious apprehensions are entertained for his health.

Then follows this :

It was at first intended that Monsieur de Bériot should remain at the inn all night ; but, finding himself entirely unable to rest, having, indeed, scarcely slept or tasted food for the last two or three days, Dr Belluomini thought it best that he should immediately return to London. A carriage and four was accordingly prepared, and about half-past one o'clock this morning (less than two hours after Malibran's death) Monsieur de Bériot, accompanied by Dr Belluomini, quitted Manchester, a place which to him must ever be attended with recollections the most poignant and distressing. . . . Mme Malibran de Bériot was twenty-eight years old : so that she was in the flower of her age, as well as the zenith of her reputation, when the hand of death fell upon her.

We are told, too, that de Bériot left the chamber a few minutes before his wife's death, and that when told of it he fainted and fell to the floor with considerable violence :

He never entered the chamber or saw the body of his deceased wife. His departure was very soon afterwards decided upon, though he first gave instructions as to the interment. He particularly desired that no cast of the head or face should be taken, and that no post-mortem examination should be made; and in short that the body should not be touched by any except in course of the necessary preparations for interment.

A public funeral was arranged for the following Saturday. The city's interest in the whole affair was intense, and for some weeks the paper was full of little else. Columns were written about Malibran the artist and Malibran the woman. It appears that her display of nervous energy was tremendous, and she gave lavishly of her art, herself, and her riches. Her generosity was as unbounded as it was unostentatious. In her private life a creature of impulse, in her art she was a model of measure and propriety. Once more stress was laid on the fact that her singing was invariably in perfect tune.

Early in October a certain amount of trouble started. De Bériot wrote desiring that the body should be taken to Brussels for reinterment, and a long letter was sent to the paper by Dr Belluomini pointing out that in the previous July Malibran, a splendid horsewoman, had had a severe fall while riding. In Manchester there had already been some question of an inquest, and in reference to this the Festival Committee issued a long report vigorously denying sinister rumours and containing the sentence, "The death was the result of a nervous fever, under circumstances perfectly natural, and without the slightest ground of suspicion."

In November a decision was taken against the proposed disinterment, and a few days after this the *Manchester Guardian* wrote :

It is alleged that M. de Bériot conducted himself in an unfeeling manner before and immediately after the death of his wife; but, even if that allegation were proved to its utmost extent, we think it would neither alter the law nor

the propriety of the case; but we are sure that the allegation has not been proved; and we do not believe it is true. There was undoubtedly in the sudden departure of M. de Bériot something very irreconcilable with English notions and standards of propriety; but we must recollect that M. de Bériot is not an Englishman; and we must recollect, too, that throughout the melancholy occasion in question, he was acting under the control of another (Dr Belluomini), being himself, as appears from the concurrent testimony of all who saw him, perfectly incapable of acting for himself.

After that there was a Court of Appeal case, presumably having to do with Malibran's fortune, in which it was decided that she had never been legally divorced from her first husband. I have always understood that many years afterwards the body was disinterred and taken to Paris for reburial. At least, Gustave Garcia, Malibran's nephew and my father's oldest friend, told us so.

Well, that is the end of the story. The cause of Malibran's death was for long hotly disputed between the Manchester doctors and the Italian medico brought from London. Whatever the actual disease, the explanation given by the great Lablache was probably the most satisfactory: "Son grand esprit était trop fort pour son petit corps."

Sept. 25 The talk at supper turning on stage folk and how
Friday. they never think of anything except introductions to managers, Selwyn Jepson said, "I've given up making love to actresses. They put their arms round your neck and murmur, 'Do you know Sydney Carroll?'"

Sept. 26 Jock this morning: "When you die I shall be at
Saturday. the bedside with my notebook, leaning over you, ready to catch your last witty rattle, and saying, 'Finish the article first!'"

Sept. 27 Lunched to-day at Lord Kemsley's at Farnham
Sunday. Royal. I suppose it will take years to stop thinking of him as Gomer Berry. Not quite so many

ex-viceroy present as usual—just an Irish peer, Sir John and Lady Reith, Herbert Morgan, and the family. Somebody asking me whether I listened in much, I replied, “Only after the B.B.C. has closed down.” I explained the apparent rudeness of this by alleging the superiority of German wireless, which, at one o’clock in the morning, can send out such a programme as one I heard last week—Mozart piano concerto, Beethoven string quartet, and the *Coriolan* overture. Reith explained that this was not the regular German programme, which, like ours, closes down round about twelve. The programme I heard was their equivalent to our Empire broadcast, which starts about the same time. And, just as listeners within 150 miles of Daventry cannot hear our Empire broadcasts, so, J.R. said, Germans within 150 miles of Berlin could not have heard that programme, whose equivalent in musical value we too are sending out. I denied this strenuously, being totally unable to credit the B.B.C. with so much musical imagination. In any case why should Cape Town and Sydney get better stuff than we do? Reith said the Germans’ great idea is propaganda, and that they think nothing of putting on the Berlin Philharmonic at midnight. I said I was sure the English notion of classical music at midnight would turn out to be a scratch orchestra and the *Poet and Peasant*, *Light Cavalry*, and *Mireille* overtures. Afterwards we got more friendly. I told Lord K. that the *Sunday Times* ought to promote broadcasting to the same rank as books, music, and the theatre, and give it a weekly *critical* article. Reith backed me up quite fiercely, and we agreed upon Filson Young as the ideal man for the job. F.Y.’s interests are very wide, and he can write equally well about church organs and flying. He has great culture and writes beautifully. The fact that many people dislike him is unimportant.

I drove Herbert Morgan back to town. Passing through Slough, he made an admirable remark: “I have always held that if one has an income of five thousand a year, four thousand should be considered as pocket-money.”

Sept. 28 Monday. I vouch for this story. A dramatic critic, attending a Jewish Memorial Service, was asked by the *Shammus* for his telephone number. He gave it. At nine o'clock next morning the critic's telephone bell rang: "I vos de beadle at Mr Levinsky's funeral. I haf written a play. . . ."

Oct. 2 Friday. Gate Theatre for Leslie and Sewell Stokes's play about Oscar Wilde. Found it very moving. Robert Morley, who played O.W., differentiated very cleverly between the overblown peony which was Oscar in the witness-box and the bedraggled rhododendron he became in the dock. I shall long remember that Awful Face, and how the body seemed to have lost a couple of stone. The play's total gesture, as Montague would say, is to point the peculiar tragedy of the homosexual, which is that of the tight-rope walker preserving his balance by prodigies of skill and poise and knowing that the rope may snap at any moment.

Oct. 4 Sunday. An orgy of sound. Thought I would like to go to a last night at the Proms. Sallied forth with George Mathew and found an incredible programme. *Merry Wives* overture. Good. "Ritorna Vincitor" from *Aida*. Unutterable muck. Saint-Saëns's Piano Concerto No. 2. Utterable muck. Bach Chaconne done for full orchestra by Casella. But why at this concert? *Songs of Travel*. R.L.S. and Vaughan Williams pretending to like soggy crusts. "Bread I dip in the river—There's the life for a man like me." Holst's *Planets*. All right. Interval. *British Sea-songs* arr. Wood. Korbay's fine song about Mohac's Field, after which a lot of baritone stuff like a Saturday night at the Savage Club. Finally Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* No. 1, taken at breakneck speed, as though H.W. was impatient to get to the Closing Scene. Left the hall in a violent state of musical indigestion, the result of listening to a band on a pier without any pier. All the same, it would be dishonest not to admit that I was moved when "Tom Bowling" was played as a 'cello solo.

Rather better concert to-day. Drive in Richmond Park with George Mathew in the morning, returning for lunch at the Café Royal. (G.M. "Is it middle-class to talk about food?" J.A. "Yes. But it's a mark of exquisite breeding to write about it.") The programme at the Palladium announces Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 and Tchaikowsky's Fifth Symphony. As these don't need listening to I fill myself up with roast beef and a bottle of cheap wine. About half-way through the Concerto I fall into something that isn't quite sleep. And then a wonderful thing happens. The nerves temporarily cease their turmoil—in plain English, chuck it. It is the one hour's respite I have had this week.

Oct. 6 Joseph Hone's *Life of George Moore* reminds me Tuesday. of my youthful phases. There was the Meredith phase, and the Kipling phase. I had a phaselet for Henry James, and I can remember where the tram was going to on the top of which I first fell for Jane Austen. But none of these was quite so violent as the George Moore phase, which, while it lasted, was very violent indeed. Here was somebody who was tremendously *au fait* with Manet, Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, Sisley, Courbet, and so on. To listen to him, Moore lived in the bosoms of these painters' wives and mistresses, while the painters themselves exhibited no work which had not obtained Moore's approval. We now know that half of what he wrote about his life in Paris was false in fact and all of it wrong in implication; Moore's idea of an artist was that he could tell any lies that suited his purpose. There is a good deal of nonsense in *Confessions of a Young Man*, but nonsense which to a young reader was intoxicating—passages about how it had been worth while to throw ten thousand virgins to the Roman lions if it provided Giorgione with a subject. Yes, it seemed a very brave old world when seen through Manet's bock and Moore's absinthe. Later on one became more seriously indebted to Moore. I owe my enthusiasm for Balzac to his essay on that little-known short novel *La Vieille Fille*. Everybody reads

Madame Bovary, but I think I should never have gone on to *L'Education Sentimentale* if it had not been for a blazing article in the short-lived *Cosmopolis*. To this day I remember how Moore first quoted the famous passage about the funeral of M. Dambreuse and then went on to say something like this: "Once a year the six or seven awakened spirits of Paris assemble under the lime-trees in the Champs-Élysées to read this passage aloud to one another by the light of the moon."

Oct. 9 The week has been rich in good acting, with two *Friday*. remarkable performances by newcomers—a young man called Mervyn Johns as Sir John Brute in the Embassy revival of Vanbrugh's *The Provoked Wife*, and a young American actress called Ruth Gordon as Margery Pinchwife in Wycherley's *The Country Wife*. In my excitement I have to be careful not to make a slip and use the word 'great.' For if I do the whole pack of Bergnerites will be after me.

Oct. 11 In Bath Abbey there is a memorial tablet to the *Sunday*. Rev. Malthus. After rehearsing the merits of the *Essay on Population* the tablet states that Malthus's "sweetness of temper, urbanity of manner, tenderness of heart, benevolence and piety are the still clearer recollections of his family and friends." The same might be said of José Levy, who died this week at the early age of fifty-two. The papers have insisted rightly on José's theatrical activities—his translations and adaptations of French plays, his creation at the Little Theatre of an English Grand Guignol. But what his friends mourn to-day is not José's work, but José, the sweetest-tempered man any of us have ever known. The Savage Club is the home of genial back-biting; it is part of our charter. But I never heard José spoken of without affection. He was greatly lovable, and was greatly loved.

The funeral took place in the Jewish cemetery at Edmon-ton. A very simple and noble service, hardly distinguishable

from the Unitarian. What does it matter when we come to first things whether we keep our hats on or take them off, whether we read from left to right or right to left? Came back with Mark Hambourg, who said he was always struck by this: that while death is the one certain thing in life it is the one thing which always surprises us. For myself, on these occasions I always take refuge in Stevenson's "Death may be knocking at the door, like the Commander's statue; we have something else in hand, thank God, and let him knock." Life has got to be lived, and, after a funeral, resumed. It is the indifferent who, as it were, prolong a funeral and go about with grave faces for the rest of the day; those who have experienced real sorrow are quick to catch at life again, to get back into their own selves. Grief may very well express itself in high spirits. To-day I did not get back into my own skin, as it were, until I heard Mark say, "This is Tottenham, where they make the furniture. A poor piece of information!" José's eyes would have twinkled at this. One of the most touching things about him was his love for his stepson. He was a real father, just as he was a real friend and a real artist. He never let managing a theatre interfere with his love for the drama as an art.

Oct. 12 Brother Mycroft comes up from Manchester. It is Monday. his birthday, and he is very unhappy about being fifty-eight. We talk about old age and the hideousness of it. "Not always," says Mycroft. "There is nothing more beautiful than the face of a *good* old man or woman. Look at that exquisite old lady at the table by the door!" We are at the Ivy, and the wrinkles in question are those of the popular actress who possesses London's loveliest nostril and wickedest tongue!

I said in the *S.T.* yesterday that Edith Evans plays Lady Fidget in *The Country Wife* "like Britannia turned bawdy." I was wrong and not definite enough; the comparison wanted narrowing down. I should have said that she delivers the famous "To report a person has had a person, when he has

not had a person," etc., in the ringing accents of a bawdy Mrs Kendal! As a purely intellectual conception I hold this to be permissible.

Oct. 14 Went last night to the *Romeo and Juliet* film. Wednesday. It is monstrously over-produced. And for a very good reason, which is that two-dimensional acting is just not good enough. Read Shakespeare, and you create for yourself a three-dimensional world peopled by creatures of flesh and blood. See a Shakespeare play on the stage proper, and you behold a reasonable semblance of the three-dimensional world peopled by actors of flesh and blood. The film is neither the study nor the stage, but a wishy-washy, two-dimensional compromise. If *Romeo and Juliet* had been a silent film the London Symphony Orchestra would have been called in to restore the balance. But, says somebody, *Romeo and Juliet* could never have been a silent film: what about Shakespeare's poetry? The answer is that even the talkies do not give us Shakespeare's poetry. That, then, is the explanation of all the absurdities of over-production. Last night's show began with a parade of Montagues and Capulets reminding one of a Hollywood party. Now I just do not believe that the Capulet household contained forty page-boys, or that Juliet went about attended by forty tiring-maids. I do not believe that Juliet's bedroom was at the end of a corridor containing as many doors as a floor in the Regent Palace Hotel. I do not believe that the Montague-Capulet brawl attained the same dimensions as the Battle of Agincourt. I do not believe that the entrance to the Capulets' tomb was as magnificent as the façade of Chartres Cathedral.

As always on these occasions, the programme was a mine of information: "Materials which would almost have built a small town went into the work. 60,000 square feet of plaster, 700,000 feet of heavy lumber, 85,000 square feet of composition board, 24,000 pounds of tiling." The critic's view of all this nonsense has been set down once and for all. It is contained in the poem of the Walrus and the Carpenter,

who, you remember, wept like anything to see such quantities of sand. "If this were only cleared away," they said, "it *would* be grand." If only the film producers would clear away their junk! The programme goes on: "Just to keep the ballroom floor swept clean was the constant job of seven men, and an equal number of brooms." This is handing it to one on a plate. "If seven maids with seven mops . . ."

Film programmes are notoriously immune from humour. Were they not it would be impossible for them to print such a passage as the following: "Informed that she would be tested, Miss Shearer balked at an immediate test. She asked for time in which to study. Then began *one of the most rigorous novitiates since the time of Ignatius Loyola*. [Italics mine.] Miss Shearer retired into the Italy of the 15th century. She read books on the etiquette of the day, instructions on the deportment of a young girl of the time. She studied the costumes of the period, and looked at hundreds of copies of the works of the painters of the time. Practically nothing that a girl of fourteen of that day would have thought, known, or done remained foreign to Miss Shearer." But one must not impute this goggle-eyed nonsense to American taste only. I have not forgotten the English musical-comedy actress who, prior to essaying the rôle of Cleopatra, made herself "personally acquainted with every mummy in the British Museum." The programme then tells us that, "completely steeped in the tradition of Juliet, Miss Shearer had the courage to renounce it when the time came for making her screen test. It might be simpler, she felt, *to play the part as Ellen Terry had*." [Italics again mine.] Leslie Howard's Romeo is hang-dog.

Oct. 15 The papers to-day alternately enrage and delight
Thursday. me. The D.E. has taken a hand in the game of
numerals, and I am made to write apropos of
Marie Bashkirtseff :

Gladstone was then 78, and the Diary was the work of a young girl, begun at the age of 12 and ending with her death at the age of 24.

The other day they talked of "1000's of hours" being saved. Why not "1000's of £'s" being spent? Why not reprint Tennyson to read:

$\frac{1}{2}$ a league, $\frac{1}{2}$ a league,
 $\frac{1}{2}$ a league onward,
 All in the valley of Death
 Rode the 600.

So far as I have seen, the *Manchester Guardian* is the only paper to give space, or the proper amount of space, to the dinner given by the P.E.N. Club to H. G. Wells on his seventieth birthday. (Even the *M.G.* is beginning to wobble numerically. "There were 500 of Mr Wells's friends to salute him on his seventieth birthday." Surely either 'five hundred' and 'seventieth' or '500' and '70th.' Jock thinks I am mad to be so punctilious, and that to go on being annoyed by this will be to spend the rest of my life with my teeth on edge. I can't help it. The only place where this vile thing is permissible is in a notebook or diary.)

One sentence in the *M.G.* strikes me as very funny: "Miss G. B. Stern paid to Mr Wells the tribute of a million Andromedas thanking Perseus for their rescue from the Victorian papa." In the drawing-room at home there used to hang an engraving of Gustave Doré's *Andromeda*. This showed a famished dragon greedily approaching a rock to which was chained a naked and highly appetising female. Miss Stern's tribute conjures up a vision of the typical woman novelist "dans tout l'éclat de sa blanche nudité."

Oct. 18 That I should be alive after yesterday astonishes Sunday. me. It is largely the fault of Mark Hambourg, who is so much the life and soul of every party that one eats and drinks as he talks—pell-mell. He had a ridiculous story at Stanley Rubinstein's Saturday luncheon party, all about a Great Dane whose broken tail was put by his children's German governess into splints and an umbrella cover. Walking down the street in his enormous hat and glasses, with half a dozen scores under his arm and preceded by the dog, he was accosted by a stranger who

desired to know what breed the animal belonged to. "Sir," replied Mark, in his grandest manner, "that is an umbrella dog!" It was not until leaving about five o'clock that I realized the amount and variety of the drink taken—a superb Montrachet, some admirable Lanson, and too much old brandy. Two hours later I was sitting down to a solid, substantial, and thick Saturday Night Savage Club Dinner, and, as I had a guest, that meant more champagne. (Mark and Benno played Saint-Saëns's *Dance Macabre* for two pianos, and we made Henry Wood an honorary life member. It is forty-five years since my mother made me play Mendelssohn's *Rondo Capriccioso* for H.W. in Gustave Garcia's drawing-room.) At ten o'clock I had to leave, owing to an engagement to sup with an old crony, who set me down to cold pork and, knowing my weakness, a bottle of champagne. The result was that I slept better than usual, and awoke in my best form. Not a sign of indigestion. Nevertheless I judged it prudent to go slow to-day, and so lunched late off potted shrimps and water.

Oct. 19 Either you can't sell a horse at all or you can sell *Monday.* it twice over. As soon as Ego declared himself I knew it was all up with Tulip, who is exactly the same height. And I realised that even if the little mare deserved second place to Ego she would never get it, as judges don't like giving too much to one exhibitor. I have known I should have to sell Tulip for over a year, but could get nobody interested. Then, one day last week, I sold her to an American millionaire, a coaching man who intends to show her in his team at the New York Horse Show. The next day I had an inquiry for her from Scotland! I got exactly what I gave Albert Throup for her, and as her prize-money just about paid for the show expenses, all she has cost me is her keep for four years and her entrance fees at the shows. At a generous estimate I have had all my fun out of her at something under £500. She gave me many a thrill, and was always an exquisite animal, if never quite a topnotcher. I shall never forget her first show at Oxford.

Oct. 20 I have discovered how new words, or, rather, the
Tuesday. new use of old words, comes about. Writing
about the Walsh-Mizler fight in the *Evening*
Standard last night, Bennison had this sentence :

But by then Walsh was the winner by ever so many points and the fighter had come into his own, to leave the loser sorely stricken with a consciousness that it might have been different if he had, from start to finish, fought with every gusto instead of seeing the red light so soon as he was called into action.

"Every gusto," at first sight, is vile. So too was Trevor Wignall's recent use of the word 'alibi,' meaning excuse. He wrote that he was not trying to invent an "alibi" for some boxer's failure. Yet I suppose Time will turn these atrocities into usable, if not good, English, in the way that 'intriguing' has become condoned if not pardoned. The bastard use of 'intriguing' supplies a definite want, since it conveys something for which no other word exists. I am taking it for granted that while new words can be coined to fit new objects—'aviator,' 'jazz,' 'radio,' etc.—we have to use old words to suit the new expression of an old idea. When I saw "every gusto" in this afternoon's paper it was as though I had been stung by a wasp. By dinner-time the swelling had sensibly diminished.

The Empress Stadium at Earl's Court, where the National Sporting Club has taken on a new lease of life, is a magnificent place. Easy of entrance and exit, capable of holding over 10,000 people, it is spacious, airy, and well ventilated. No draughts, and a reasonable temperature. Excellent view from every seat. As this is a blessed week of no theatres, I was able to be present, and enjoyed the smaller bouts very much. By the way, I note and deplore the introduction of the personal element into these affrays. Of the holder the programme said :

Walsh married three months ago. He does not drink, but when he is not in training he walks about with a pipe in his mouth and, when Mrs Walsh is not looking, he puts his feet on the mantelpiece.

Of the challenger :

Mizler is a busy man outside the ring as well as in it. When he is not in training for a fight he is up much earlier than you are, helping to run the flourishing fish business of his family. He wants to give his brother Moe—himself a boxer not so long ago—a wedding present in the form of a lightweight title. On November 1st Moe Mizler is getting married. Harry's sister married a week after he had beaten Cuthbert, so he wants to do the 'double,' and give Brother Moe the same present for *his* wedding.

I don't remember Hazlitt telling me about the domestic habits of the Gas-man and Bill Neate. Here I should leave the subject, were it not for the old journalist's habit of verifying references. For, having written the last sentence but one, I turn up Hazlitt's essay to see whether my memory is as perfect as the essayist's taste. To my amazement I find this :

About the Gas-man. The Gas-man takes now and then a chirping glass (under the rose) to console him, during a six weeks' probation, for the absence of Mrs Hickman—an agreeable woman, with (I understand) a pretty fortune of two hundred pounds.

About Bill Neate. It was evident Bill Neate was pleased that he had won the fight. When it was over, I asked Cribb if he did not think it was a good one? He said, 'Pretty well!' The carrier-pigeons now mounted into the air, and one of them flew with the news of her husband's victory to the bosom of Mrs Neate. Alas for Mrs Hickman!

The fight was something of a disappointment, Walsh having no difficulty in retaining the title. And how everybody missed Harry Preston!

Oct. 21 Driving to lunch yesterday, Jock and I had a brilliant idea. It is that we should both write a novel about our common enchantress—a Pirandellish lady to whom neither of us has ever spoken, and of whose name, even, we are unaware. We do not know whether she is married or single. All we know is that on and

off during the last eight years we have seen her supping by herself, that she is middle-aged and florid, a Renoir and a dear! We are each to do 20,000 words and swear not to see the other's contribution. Actually it will be two complete short novels, their only connection being that they are written round the same person. We are to agree on a name and no more. We always talk of her as "La Trocadera."

Discussion at lunch to-day about how tall an actor must be to play Lear. I said he must give the impression of being rather more than life-size, like one of Blake's old men. I think it is Holman Hunt whose picture of Lear makes him look about six foot six. Ernest Milton was of the opinion that swell of soul plus voice will do. (Ernest's weakness has always been to see himself in parts he can't look, Othello instead of Iago, for example.) He amused us all very much with his definition of the great actor of tradition: "A magnificent fellow with a nose like the prow of a battleship parting a couple of waves. After he's parted two more you're tired of him."

Oct. 22 Good talk at the Savage Club about the *Infini-*
Thursday. ties:

WARNER ALLEN. I am a mystic. Why be afraid of Death? Since Time is not absolute, but merely something invented by Man for his convenience, we are already dead. Equally when we are dead we shall be alive. We are both now. Past, present, and future are one. (*Turning to his guest*) By the way, what about lunching with me to-morrow?

GUEST. Sorry—I'm going to see the execution of Charles the First.

Oct. 28 Motored Leo Pavia down to Brighton. He told me
Friday. his smoked salmon story, of which I never tire.

Old Mr Silverstone, a rich merchant, was accustomed on leaving his house in the morning to bestow upon the poor co-religionists assembled outside various sums of money. One morning Mr S., being in an especially good humour, presented a particularly seedy *schnorrer* with a half-sovereign. At eleven o'clock the same morning, going



With Leo Parvia

into Sweeting's to eat a small plate of smoked salmon according to his wont, he was staggered to perceive the *schnorrer* indulging in a large plate of the same delicacy. Accosting him, Mr S. said, "Are you the man to whom I gave half a sovereign this morning?" The *schnorrer*, with his mouth full, nodded. "Why then," said Mr S., with some heat, "do I find you here eating smoked salmon?" The *schnorrer*, swallowing rapidly, retorted, "Mr Silverstone, vill you listen? Ven I haf no money I can buy no smoked salmon. Ven I haf money I must not buy smoked salmon. Vill you tell me, Mr Silverstone, ven then shall I eat smoked salmon?"

The old thing was full of good stories.

One was about a distinguished aurist, a notable bridge-fiend who looks like a short-sighted walrus. One day in 1915 his woman partner messed up a hand to such an extent that the old man followed her about the room telling her how the hand should have been played. A few days later the news arrived of the death at the Front of the aurist's only son, with the result that for some time he did not come to the club. When, some weeks later, he did turn up he was met by the lady who had ruined the hand. She, full of sympathy, exclaimed, "My dear Doctor F——, I am so sorry. I am so very sorry!" Whereat the aurist, gazing vindictively at her, said, "That is all very well, madam, but it's too late. Had you led the King of Spades and followed it up with the Knave . . ."

Oct. 24 Golf at Littlehampton on top of too much lunch. *Saturday*. A wheezy, grunting, asthmatic, pot-bellied round which recalls all the things Prince Hal said to Falstaff's face about his stomach. I hold my own with young Riseborough for nine holes, after which I go to pieces, physically and morally. I even very nearly lose my temper, and am glad the game is over at the sixteenth.

In the evening Leo and I drop in to a concert at the Dome by the Society of Symphonic Players. *Meistersinger* overture, a Mozart concerto with Szigeti, who butlers it very well, and Brahms' Fourth Symphony. The concert winds up

with de Falla's dances from *The Three-cornered Hat*. It is rather fun to creep into 'unprofessional' places like this and see how they carry on when, so to speak, nobody's listening. The orchestra does brilliantly in the de Falla, and some day, perhaps, I shall get over my prejudice against women leaders.

Leo is an extraordinary mine of out-of-the-way information. I mention casually that I have seen the *Mayerling* film at the Curzon. The old boy actually remembers the name of the coachman—Bratfisch! He tells me at great length all about Frau Schratt, and reels off a list of her great parts. Now comes an extravagant coincidence. In this morning's paper I read that the old lady, now aged eighty-three, is dying in a little suburban villa in Vienna. In her heyday, says Leo, she was a first-class actress, an artist to her finger-tips, and a woman with a riotous sense of life and humour.

To-night Leo interrupted my writing to say, "Since you pretend, dear James, to like Chopin's little-played No. 1 *Concerto*"—he was reading an advance copy of *Ego* 2—"you'd better hear it." Whereupon he went to the piano and played it. All Leo's musical conversation is on a par with Mr Squeers's notions about practical spelling. Ask him how a piece is played, and he will play it to you. L. made his first appearance in London as a boy prodigy at the age of eleven. At fifteen he gave three recitals at the St James's Hall, and his name occurs in Shaw's *Music in London*. He then went to Vienna, where for four years he studied under Leschetitzky, his fellow-students being Mark Hambourg, Ethel and Harold Bauer, Sapellnikoff, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Katharine Goodson, and Artur Schnabel. At lunch to-day I said something about dishonourable conduct. "What is honourable, and what is dishonourable?" Leo exclaimed. "Many years ago a friend of mine approached a young and starving poet with a business proposition. He would get a hundred pounds if he would go through the ceremony of marriage with a woman who was to inherit a considerable legacy provided she could produce a marriage certificate. The husband, of course, was to leave her at the door of the

registry office. The poet flew into a violent rage, refused point-blank, borrowed a shilling, and walked out of the house, slamming the door. My friend followed him and saw him turn into a public-house. He waited five minutes and went in himself. There, if you please, was the poet standing a drink to somebody needier and seedier than himself."

Oct. 26 Our friend 'alibi' is progressing apace. At the Monday. Green Room Club Dinner last night Leslie Henson alluded to the club as the best *alibi* in London. Last week 'alibi' was an excuse. This week it's a sanctuary. My *Kingdoms for Horses* published to-day.

Oct. 29 I pick up a daily paper whose society gossip Thursday. writes: "Possibly the centenary this week of Honoré de Balzac's *Comédie Humaine* has inspired this new simplicity for evening wraps of Lyons velvet and other beautiful fabrics."

What on earth can the woman mean? Publication of the *Comédie* started in 1831 and continued until 1848. The year 1836 was not even a particularly fruitful one, the only first-class thing in it being *La Vieille Fille*, which is really a long short story. 1837 was a much finer year, since it produced the first part of *Les Illusions Perdues*, the whole of *Les Employés*, and that superb masterpiece of tragi-comedy, *Histoire de la Grandeur et de la Décadence de César Birotteau*. This last is my favourite of all, and I waste half a valuable morning looking up a witty article on the manner of its composition, written by one Edouard Ourliac, and published in the *Figaro* for December 15, 1837. I waste the other half of the morning condensing the article and coaxing Jock to transcribe it from Lovenjou's tiny print.

Le Figaro avait promis le livre au 15 decembre, et M. de Balzac le commence le 17 novembre. M. de Balzac et le *Figaro* ont la singulière habitude de tenir parole quand ils ont promis. L'imprimerie était prête et frappait du pied comme un coursier bouillant.

M. de Balzac envoie aussitôt deux cents feuillets

crayonnés en cinq nuits de fièvre. On connaît sa manière. C'était une ébauche, un chaos, une apocalypse, un poème hindou.

L'imprimerie pâlit. Le délai est bref, l'écriture inouïe. On transforme le monstre, on le traduit à peu près en signes connus. Les plus habiles n'y comprennent rien de plus. On le porte à l'auteur.

L'auteur renvoie les deux premières épreuves collées sur d'énormes feuilles, des affiches, des paravents. C'est ici qu'il faut frémir et avoir pitié. L'apparence de ces feuilles est monstrueuse. De chaque signe, de chaque mot imprimé, part un trait de plume qui rayonne et serpente comme une fusée à la Congrève, et s'épanouit à l'extrémité en pluie lumineuse de phrases, d'épithètes et de substantifs, soulignés, croisés, mêlés, raturés, superposés; c'est d'un aspect éblouissant.

Imaginez quatre ou cinq cents arabesques de ce genre, s'enlaçant, se nouant, grimant et glissant d'une marge à l'autre, et du sud au septentrion. Imaginez douze cartes de géographie enchevêtrant à la fois villes, fleuves et montagnes. Un écheveau brouillé par un chat, tous les hiéroglyphes de la dynastie des Pharaons, ou les feux d'artifice de vingt réjouissances.

A cette vue, l'imprimerie se réjouit peu . . .

Le lendemain, M. de Balzac renvoie deux feuilles de pur chinois. Le délai n'est plus que de quinze jours. Un prote généreux offre de se brûler la cervelle.

Deux nouvelles feuilles arrivent très lisiblement écrites en siamois.

Les épreuves sont ainsi renvoyées sept fois de suite. On commence à reconnaître quelques symptômes d'excellent français; on signale même quelque liaison dans les phrases. Mais le terme arrive, l'ouvrage ne paraîtra pas. La désolation est au comble, et c'est ici que le travail se complique d'un admirable concours de calamités.

Au plus fort de la hâte, le malheureux qui portait jour et nuit des épreuves à M. de Balzac est arrêté le soir par des bandits qui les lui volent. Ce malheureux crie et se débat, les malfaiteurs prennent la fuite. On rattrape une épreuve à Neuilly, la seconde dans un champ de betteraves, et une troisième qui descendait à Rouen, tout le long de la rivière . . .

L'ouvrage avance; mais tout d'un coup douze ouvriers

disparaissent. Un tonnerre éclate. Le plancher s'effond, et les poêles, les casiers, les charpentes enroulées dans un galop furieux, suivent les malheureux dans l'abîme, sous une pluie d'aérolithes inconnus. *César Birotteau* est tombé dans une diligence qui vient de partir pour Louviers. *César Birotteau* court le monde. On le poursuit. On arrête la diligence. '*César Birotteau* ou la vie!' Les voyageurs hésitent; mais ils rendent *César Birotteau*. On leur laisse la vie.

L'ouvrage a repris de plus belle, et M. de Balzac et le *Figaro* ont tenu parole.

When I first read this I paused: I had never known Balzac to be so single-minded. Fortunately I read on, and in the tail of the article found the sting which had been lacking: "Il est vrai que M. de Balzac occupait en même temps à autre chose quarante ouvriers d'une autre imprimerie."

Oct. 30 Dined last night with the Sorooptimists. Too busy to *Friday*. prepare a new lecture, so read them bits out of *Ego* 2.

This included the story about the old actor whose name I could not remember, and whose toupet nearly came off in Madge Kendal's hands when she was playing Virginia to his Virginius. After the reading a lady rose and said she had been present at that performance and knew the name of the actor. "He was called William Creswick, and I saw him play Virginius to Madge Robertson's Virginia when I was about five. I was taken out of the theatre screaming. I saw Creswick many times, and he always wore a bright chestnut wig. To the day of his death he never admitted to a grey hair." When I got home I looked up Creswick in the reference books. He died in 1888 at the age of seventy-four.

Nov. 2 Opening of the *Sunday Times* Book Exhibition. *Monday*. All the publishers have stalls except Gollancz, so that the show is like a Shakespeare without *Hamlet*. Every literary bore in London present, and the prodigiously the bore the harder to avoid. At the party to-night they descended upon one in droves. Some enchanting women to restore the balance, among them Athene

Seyler, Irene Vanbrugh, Marie Tempest, Hilda Vaughan,
 Sylvia Lynd, and, of course, the one and only Rebecca.

Nov. 8 From Brother Edward :
Tuesday.

THE EPITAPH

Hic jacet was the customary form
 The Ancients used, to start an epicedium,
 Devoid of simple truth, replete with tedium,
 On those who now are cold that once were warm.

To-day, in English tongue, the tag "Here lies"
 Begins the roll of fame spectacular;
 "*Ci-gît*," in French—the meaning still applies,
 In foreign phrase or the vernacular.

But on the slab, denoting Edward's tomb,
 No tricky blandishments shall they inscribe;
 For he, in person, hath pronounced his doom,
 Beginning with a self-imposed gibe:
 "The elbow, once he lifted to imbibe,
 He lifts no more, for lack of elbow-room."

Then, lower down, a comprehensive screed,
 In hieroglyphic characters mysterious:
 His history in full; for prudes to read
 And sticklers for convention, deleterious;
 Nay, at the sight, Catullus would have blushed,
 Schiller recoiled, and even Goethe tushed.

Full well he knew, his family would meet,
 Post-morteming in the approved way;
 And each, in turn, propound the quaint conceit
 Of hens so white they never laid astray.

He further was aware, his ample store
 Of misdemeanours would not be condoned;
 But rather dwelt upon and stressed, the more
 To vilify a mem'ry unbemoaned.

"He's gone at last!" "Spent is the breath of him!"
 "Lived on us all for years, and thought it funny!"
 "Those Golden Cock'rels were the death of him!"
 "Why couldn't he be vulgar and make money?"
 And so on, in the well-established fashion;
 Evidence of true Christian compassion.

And while this pleasant atmosphere persists,
 Of Sanctimony-cum-vituperation;
 And while these well-intentioned humanists
 Are putting corpses in their proper station,

They find no will or testament exists—
 In truth, no violence to expectation—
 But, counting it as one of his offences,
 They wrangle o'er the funeral expenses.

Vex not his spirit with th' unseemly sound!
 With jarring notes no longer try his ears!
 He'll come no more, the bones are underground
 Of him who ever ate his bread with tears.

E. A.

Nov. 6 Fall of Madrid imminent. Jock was so much upset
Friday. before lunch that he could hardly work. The cause
 was the destruction of Goya's frescoes and the
 danger threatening the Velasquez's at the Prado. My pre-
 tended concern is for the 800,000 killed, including 30,000
 executed, which I understand to be the latest figures. But
 this, on my part, is cant. What I mean is that if I had time
 for the Spanish Civil War this is what I should first be con-
 cerned about. But I am too busy to give a thought to it,
 and they must fight it out without me. A difficult day, since
 Jock was equally upset after lunch. One of our younger
 critics, who had been interviewing Sir Frank Benson, came
 up to Jock, buttonholed him, and said with gleaming teeth
 and sickly grin: "Do you suppose he ever *could* act?"
 Benson impressed me more than any other English actor I
 ever saw, except Irving. He was the best Hamlet, Lear,
 Coriolanus, Mark Antony, Henry V, Malvolio, and Caliban
 I have ever seen. He was *the only* Richard II.

Nov. 7 A new wit, who is also a bad actor, has come to
Saturday. town. He said of a friend, "His heart is as big as
 a theatre. And every seat is bookable!"

Nov. 9 The night has been unruly; some say the earth
Monday. was feverous and did shake. In non-Shakespearian
 English, *Ego* 2 was given to the world at midnight.
 The *S.T.* had a discouraging review and a heartening adver-
 tisement yesterday. Gollancz, fishing for advance opinions,
 had hauled in a noble catch. Eddie Marsh, Cedric Hardwicke,
 Hugh Walpole, Noel Coward, E. M. Delafield, and Bob
 Sherriff were all highly flattering. But the best of all was

Rebecca's, "I shall keep these journals as I keep the Goncourt Journals, as records of their time more truly historical than history." The Goncourt reference is wildly gratifying, and I like Hugh's notion that I am a character in the novel that Dickens and Dostoievsky would have written in collaboration. Add that in the *Observer* Humbert Wolfe, while using his most malicious pen, does me proud with a reference to Pepys. The fact that it is a backhanded one—"a winsome self-satisfaction unequalled since Pepys"—does not matter. The point is that he couples with it a "rich Balzacian love of life and self." It is the overtones which count. Goncourt, Dickens, Dostoievsky, Pepys, Balzac . . .

Nov. 10 The *Star* likens me to Rousseau! The *News Tuesday Chronicle*, in a really gorgeous notice which makes me go red-hot all over, calls me "literature's Caledonian Market." And here is some excellent fun, again from the *News Chronicle*:

Whirled right off her feet by Mr James Agate's new instalment of autobiography, Miss Rebecca West has ecstatically declared that "any sensible woman" would want to marry him. Mr Agate informed us authoritatively yesterday that the sensible feminine population of these islands may relinquish its hopeless dream here and now, for he is already wedded.

It is recent history (mainly Mr Agate's) how Mr Agate discovered Southend some five years ago and raised it to its present glory. Every year subsequently, with Venetian pomp, Mr Agate has been formally wedded to the sea off Southend Pier by the Mayor and Corporation amid emotional scenes. The ring is of curious workmanship, bearing outside the posy *Ego et Vow Mea* and round the inside a line from Mr Agate's favourite poet, expressing Southend's reciprocal passion: "C'est Vénus toute entière à sa proie attachée."

Talking of fun, I hope Hilda and Charles Morgan won't mind when I am writing about them in to-morrow's *Daily Express*:

Hilda Vaughan's *Harvest Home* is written by a lady who would look like Shakespeare's Rosalind provided that enchantress had the wit to look like Mrs Charles Morgan, which is this author's name in private life. Miss Vaughan's novels are not in the least like Mr Morgan's. There is not a shred of metaphysics about them, and I doubt if Miss Vaughan would recognise a "perdurable hypostasis" if she met one on the stairs. On the other hand, I doubt whether Mr Morgan would recognise a corpse hanging from a gallows. He would, I suspect, describe it as a tree ecstatic with mortuary fruit. They are a delicious pair of writers. The one edifies with his heroes and heroines who do nothing and give monumental reasons for their inactivity; the other enchants with stories about gibbets, corpses, ship-wrecking on jagged coasts washed by wild Welsh seas, and all without a ha'porth of explanation as to why.

George Moore somewhere talks about married couples who paint, and describes the process as *la peinture à quatre mains*. There is nothing of this sort about Mr Morgan and Miss Vaughan, who, I am convinced, do not go in for *l'écriture à quatre mains*. I picture them sitting at twin desks, or possibly one at each end of a long room and each looking out on a garden. And I imagine that there is silence between them except for an occasional "Can you lend me a colon, Hilda?" or "Have you done with the brackets, dear?"

Nov. 12 A charming letter from an unknown correspon-
Thursday. dent who writes me four times a week and some-
times oftener:

Nov. 9th, 1936. *A soft day, thank God.*

DEAR DUCKIE,

Would you like a cushion made of handwoven 'Pen-
nine' fabric and worked in 'Beehive' wool as per instruc-
tions in a 80/- book by Gladys Windsor Fry?

I've had to get my riding boots out again (I can only
ride cart horses). They are lousy to walk in, and can't
have the heels made any higher (to look right) unless the
waist of the boot is taken up.

Could J. B. Priestley write a play about Chrétien-

Guillaume de la Something de la Malesherbes? . He sounds a nice bloke to me.

As I was returning home last night I came round by the Church. It was misty and damp and all the trees and shrubs and tombstones glistened with rain. The gravel scrunched under one's feet.

Pouring mit rainings.

NOBBY

P.S. Have just seen two of our boys going along Market Street with a long, bright-blue ladder.

Nov. 14
Saturday.

The Empress Poppæa
Said, " Nero, you're queer! "
Nero said, " Like Caligula,
I am a bit irrigula! "

Nov. 15 Fred Leigh—the Posh to my Fitzgerald—came Sunday. into my bedroom yesterday morning while I was dictating. He went through my pockets, found a pound note, and, since I have enjoined silence while working, did a lot of gesticulating. I waved him out of the room and went on dictating. Later I learned that his signals meant, " Liverpool Meeting. Five shillings win Ego [the race-horse] and Boston West, five shilling double, and five shilling place double," all to be put on with the bookie at the street corner. Later in the day he produced £1 17s. 9d., both horses having come in second.

Took Peter Page to lunch at Hampton Court. Called at the Green Man, built on the site of the pub at which Swinburne used to call for the dinner-beer. Over the mantelpiece is an engraving like a lace curtain. A brass plate tells you that

The above was engraved by J. Wilson, whilst serving a sentence in H.M. Convict Prison in 1882. It commemorates the escape from assassination of her most gracious Majesty Queen Victoria.

Excellent lunch. Lobster cutlets, duck, and Stilton, with a waiter straight out of Lamb's Essays. The coffee, we being in England, was undrinkable. There is only one way of making coffee, which is to use plenty—2 tablespoonfuls



Photo Sport and General

With Peter Page

per small cup—serve hot, and charge what you like. Peter talked a lot about Harry Tate, and how he had heard Charles Hawtrey and Seymour Hicks agree that he was the greatest master of *timing* the stage had ever known. He also reminded me of some lugubrious farce in which a coffin was borne across the stage, and how Hannen Swaffer said in his rich accent, “Oi wish Oi was in it !”

Nov. 16 To-day's horror. Posh brought me some violets,
Monday. and, finding the scent not strong enough, poured lavender water over them !

Nov. 20 The week's good thing. A journalist saying that
Friday. his editor was ill, Lionel Hale murmured, “Nothing trivial, I hope !”

Nov. 21 Brighton. In the car I recall Ivor Brown's com-
Saturday. plaint about my refraining from politics in this daily record. Well, what about to-day's programme ? In my mind I run over the following :

The King wants me to do something about the depressed areas in South Wales.

The Archbishop of Canterbury wants me to do something about the 20,000 Assyrians who haven't got any homes.

General Franco wants my consent to bomb Barcelona.

The General on the other side wants me to stop this in the name of humanity.

The Home Secretary wants me to assist him in raising the birth-rate.

A. P. Herbert wants me to amend the Divorce Laws.

The Minister for War reports a falling-off in recruiting.

The Government wants my consent to the prohibition of semi-military uniforms for semi-political parties, *i.e.*, Fascists and Communists.

None of these things is my individual concern in the sense that I am keeping a personal diary or record of individual experiences. At this point Leo Pavia wants to know what Hitler can do to stop world-famous pianists from being Jews !

I suggest teaching Christians to play the piano. Whereupon Leo suggests that half the Jewish world-pianists are Christians in disguise. Conversation then drops until, thirty miles farther on, Leo says he wishes to withdraw his last remark : " Only a Jew would think of it ! "

Having secured our usual rooms at Harrison's, we toddle across to the Albion for dinner. The first thing I see is Harry's *Memoirs*. Leo says these ought to be called *Bowing and Scraping*, and I think they might be called *The History of a Self-educated Man*. They are full of a snobbery unforgivable in a private individual, but wholly commendable in a hotel-keeper. Harry was determined to rise to the top, and the top to which he could rise was a hotel-keeper's apex and no other. Like every other climber, he could only get to the summit of his own mountain. An early photograph shows that Harry started from uncommonly near the bottom. In 1886, with plastered quiff and curled moustache, he could easily have been mistaken for what the Victorians called a cad. All the more honour to him to get where he did. Of course his manners became too fine; their very excess was Harry's method of showing that he knew his place.

Nov. 22 Spent half an hour last night in Renee Houston's *Sunday*. dressing-room. We had one of those confidential talks which are only possible between complete strangers. She radiated an unforced kindness, and in spite of the bad time she has gone through was as full of heart as a stick of celery. I liked her very much indeed.

Brother Edward has picked up and sent me the very rare second volume of *The Dramatic Censor*, by Francis Gentleman (1728-84). Here is the only, and very good, story :

Before we dismiss this tragedy [*King John*], permit us to offer a short anecdote related by a gentleman who saw it performed at Portsmouth last war. The French party coming on with white cockades, a zealous tar shouts from the gallery, ' Harkee, you Mr Mounseers, strike the white flags out of your nabs, or b—— my eyes, but I'll bombard you.' A general laugh went through the house, but the

actors deeming it merely a transient joke, took no notice; upon which, our enraged son of Neptune gave the word fire, and immediately half-a-dozen apples flew, which worked the desired effect; three cheers ensued, and this incident diffused such a spirit through the house, that during the rest of the play loud huzza's attended the exits and entrances of King John's party, while King Philip and the Dauphin, notwithstanding the polite removal of their cockades, sustained many rough strokes of sea wit.

Nov. 26 First-class concert by the B.B.C., with a programme good enough to go to the Queen's Hall in person for. (Pedants please note that in a diary this is perfect English!) Berlioz's overture *Les Francs Juges*, and Debussy's "Nocturnes"—exquisite juxtaposition of Hector and Achilles—with Egon Petri insinuating Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 in between, the whole winding up with Sibelius No. 5. Leslie Heward conducted, and, while he is not impressive to watch, he appears to have impressed his players at rehearsal, which, after all, is the main thing. The papers this morning are sniffy as usual about Berlioz, the fellow in the *Times* saying: "Berlioz is *de rigueur* among conductors nowadays for showing their command of a brilliant style. Mr Heward chose the *Francs Juges* overture and performed it with the requisite gusto, as though all its play-acting was grandly serious." How damned silly! Why not remind readers that this was a very early work, and what a grand row it makes?

Nov. 27 Note that most of the papers fault the Florence Friday. Nightingale film, *The White Angel*, because it omits the last fifty years of her life and does not follow Lytton Strachey's essay. I thought it good as far as it went. The point is whether people could be got to go to see a serious screen biography of their popular heroine; there was a very small audience even for this sentimental version. I doubt very much whether the film public would relish a picture based on something Princess Marie Louise once told me: "I remember sitting on a footstool beside Queen

Victoria and hearing her say, 'We have been having a great deal of trouble with dear Miss Nightingale.'"

Nov. 28 Jock said this morning, "If you knew anything *Saturday.* about writing a diary you would put down the costume you're dictating to me in." I had got up in a hurry, and it consisted of bedroom slippers, pants, tucked-in nightshirt, golf-jacket, dressing-gown, and my grey bowler which Posh wanted to send to the cleaner's, and which I had put on my head.

Nov. 30 Can one have nostalgia for a place one has never *Monday.* been to or at? My rare visits to Oxford prove that one can. They are the oddest compound. An indefinite homesickness for something one has never known, plus a too definite realisation that these boys have all their lives before them, and that one can give them all of forty years on. It is always the same; I am proud of these invitations to talk, look forward to them, have a high old time with my vanity beautifully tickled, and lie awake most of the night feeling acutely miserable.

Went down to Cambridge on Saturday night at the bidding of the Hesperides Society, the previous occasion having been in 1980. The journey was cheerful enough, as I picked up the *Times Lit. Sup.* and *Time and Tide* at Charing Cross, and stopped the car while I read the notices of *Ego* 2. Both grand! The President of the Hesperides turns out to be a charming and intelligent young man. His name is Boon—of the publishing family—and I had written to bid him bring two companions so that we might "dine and wine." All in the best *Tom Brown at Oxford* manner. Admirably concealing their disgust, they turned up, and I quickly diagnosed as follows: Boon, I felt, was inclined to modern poetry. One of his friends was openly out to make money. The other, because appearances are deceptive, I adjudged to be a secret Rucker addict. The evening turned out very jolly, and a magnum went nowhere. On Sunday motored to Lavenham, which Suffolk celebrity-village probably needs

the sun. It was a filthily cold and wet day; so after inspecting a few elderly houses I took refuge in what I believed to be a genuinely old pub with enormous fireplaces. Unfortunately a window-pane in the dining-room was broken, and a shrill wind nearly blew one up the chimney. Food good, however, and attendance attentive. The lecture, in Trinity Hall, or, rather, a big room in that college, went off all right, I thought. Actually it wasn't a lecture, but a reading from *Ego 2*, which is less trouble for me and, I hope, more amusing for them.

At lunch I listened to this conversation between an uncle and a very young nephew, who obviously hated him:

UNCLE. Your father had a good run with the Quorn last week.

(*Nephew has his mouth too full to speak.*)

UNCLE. The week before he was out with the Pytchley.

NEPHEW. ———

UNCLE. Next week he hopes for a day with the Cottesmore.

NEPHEW. Good for Dad!

UNCLE. How many undergraduates are there at Cambridge?

NEPHEW. About five thousand.

UNCLE. And how many colleges?

NEPHEW. Sixteen or seventeen.

UNCLE. Let me see, that will be round about three hundred per college?

NEPHEW. Round about.

UNCLE. Have you started to smoke?

NEPHEW (*deeply wounded*). You wouldn't half think so. (*Of course, he may have phrased it more elegantly, but that is what I thought I heard.*)

UNCLE (*gazing out on Parker's Piece*). Are these the backs?

NEPHEW (*recovering his advantage*). My dear Uncle!

UNCLE. What is it then?

NEPHEW (*consolidating*). A field.

UNCLE. I suppose you read a lot?

NEPHEW. A lot.

UNCLE. But not after dinner?

NEPHEW. Mostly after dinner.

UNCLE. What do you do in the afternoon?

NEPHEW. Play squash, or go for a walk.

UNCLE. Who with?

NEPHEW. Other fellows. Or else alone.

UNCLE. Do you go for the walk first and play squash afterwards, or is it the other way round?

NEPHEW. It depends. Sometimes . . . etc., etc.

(I have not invented any of the foregoing.)

The afternoon brightening up, I greatly enjoyed the journey home. There was a grandly orchestrated sunset, and it felt like driving a coach-and-four into a score by Berlioz.

On going into the Café Royal late heard that the Crystal Palace had been burned down. The waiters had gone on to the roof to see the blaze. One said, "Every bit of it is practically missing." The tape was so excited that it became incoherent, and we read, "The vicinity of the tower was pushed away by onlookers."

Dec. 2 I start on the new edition of Didcot's *Wednesday. Paradoxe sur le Comédien*, and note this:

Il ne me reste plus qu'une question à vous faire.

Faites.

Avez-vous vu jamais une pièce entière parfaitement jouée?

Ma foi, je ne m'en souviens pas. . . . Mais attendez. . . .

Oui, quelquelois une pièce médiocre, par des acteurs médiocres.

Attended a meeting of the Critics' Circle, when we presented Baughan, who is retiring, with a gold watch. Lord David Cecil once wrote that he should care nothing at all if anything he did was objected to by Flaubert, Dickens, Dostoevsky, Balzac, Stendhal, Tolstoy, but that he would worry for weeks if he thought Jane Austen would disapprove. I used to feel like that whenever I disagreed with Baughan, who seldom wrote a witty article, but never an unwise one.

Further progress in the career of the word 'alibi.' I cull from the *Daily Express*:

An American banker, charged with driving at sixty-five miles an hour, said, "I was afraid some one would bump into me from behind." The police gave him a prize of five dollars for "the most original alibi given by an arrested motorist."

Dec. 4 What dire offence from amorous causes springs,
Friday. What mighty contests rise from trivial things!

And what little things flow from great! Am told to-day that owing to this affair of the King's marriage the big bookshops are completely deserted. I understand this. Why spend seven-and-sixpence on romance when you can get reality for a penny?

Determined not to let major preoccupation disturb the noisy tenor of my way, I did some much-needed shopping, and ordered three new suits, twelve new shirts, six new dress-shirts, and lots of ties, socks, handkerchiefs, etc. Shall do the shoes and hats to-morrow. Cannot put up any longer with the loop'd and window'd raggedness in which I've been going about for the past six months. Took Edith Shackleton and Jock to lunch at the Ivy. Edith said two lovely things: "There should be better work in the world for a man than to write little books about Nature." And: "*Peter Pan* is a charming play for children. It is not a rule of conduct for a great nation." Jock said about the crisis that we ought to look upon it as one of the histories of Shakespeare.

Dec. 5 The political situation is affecting everybody
Saturday. vitally—so much so that I forgot to record
Jock's remark at lunch yesterday: "We're no longer post-War, we're pre-War again."

Judging by to-day's events, we are very near pre-Civil War. Spain has ceased to exist. Where was Spain? Jim Mollison is lost. Who was he? Jim Mollison is found. Who cares? England collapses on the first day of the Test match, and Leyland rescues the side with a century. What Test match? News comes this morning that Bradman is out. But what people are asking is whether the King is going to

be out. The immediate effect of the rumpus on me is that on the way to lunch I am very nearly run into by a man driving a car and reading a special edition of the evening paper at the same time—he has the paper spread over the steering-wheel! All England is convinced that there was nothing electioneering, so to speak, about the King's journey to South Wales. It was not a move in a game of political chess; it was the outcome of something the King has been feeling and showing he felt for many years. It made an enormous appeal to the country, which recognized that here was somebody—and if it was the Sovereign, then either *tant pis* or *tant mieux*—who was not content to see whole sections of the community starve.

As I write, a postcard comes from Lewis Casson, whom I met at the first night of the revival of Granville-Barker's *Waste*. He asks whether Disestablishment is as much out of date as I suggested, adding that its implications lie at the very root of the present controversy. So far as I can see, what is concerned is not only the disestablishment of the Church, but the disestablishment of the whole social order. In an extremely witty article in the *Evening Standard* to-day Shaw easily disposes of the objections to the lady on the score that she is an American and a commoner. But he is apparently unaware of the general feeling that a King's bride should be a young lady who has not been married and therefore possesses a Tennysonian inexperience. I find that in *Ego 2* I made this entry on the day of King George's death: "When Baldwin [over the wireless] spoke of the Prince of Wales and his tremendous responsibilities there came into his voice, or I thought so, just a hint of the Lord Chief Justice of *Henry IV*, Part 2, Act V, Sc. 2." Asquith would have 'gentled' the King in the present extremity, and any horseman knows what I mean by 'gentling.' And any playgoer who has seen C. V. France help a young man out of a scrape will also know what I mean.

Everybody is impressed by Rothermere's letter saying that Baldwin is in too much of a hurry, and that "the greatest living Englishman cannot be smuggled off his throne

in a week-end." There is considerable excitement—crowds outside Buckingham Palace and so on.

It would not be correct to say there is no other topic of conversation in town. I dined at the Savage Club with Mark Hambourg and Moiseiwitsch. The talk was political at first, and then went the way of all talk where pianists are concerned—it devolved upon another pianist, this time Busoni. It appears that just before the outbreak of war Busoni made a declaration that, though an Italian, Germany was his spiritual home. When the War happened this made him so unpopular in America that he had to return to Europe; Germany would not have him because he was an Italian; Italy and Russia would not have him because of his German declaration; and France and England were, of course, impossible. So he had to decline upon Switzerland, which country was too small for his mighty genius. It was this which killed him, said Moiseiwitsch. Mark disagreed, saying that his early death was as much to be attributed to a poor digestion and the habit of making love to his pupils. Discussing a rival pianist's recital, Mark said they were "pleasantly disappointed." But I couldn't get the political situation out of my head, and at bridge afterwards revoked horribly and was sent home in disgrace.

Dec. 6 It is a quarter-past seven, and I have been *Sunday*. sitting with the wireless half on all afternoon.

There was to be a Cabinet Meeting at half-past five o'clock, at which presumably the King's decision was to be made known. So far nothing. If ever there was an occasion for a "solemn musick" this was it. While waiting I tried to read a pamphlet by J. Joseph Renaud entitled *Lagarrière s'explique*. This discusses whether *Le Bossu*, the famous Porte-Saint-Martin melodrama, was written by Sardou or Paul Féval. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* says: "*Le Bossu*, which Sardou wrote expressly for Fechter, did not satisfy the actor; and when the play was at last successfully produced, the nominal authorship, by some unfortunate arrangement, had been transferred to other men." Renaud proves that the

piece had four incarnations. (1) It was a piece by Féval and Sardou writing in collaboration. This piece was rejected everywhere. (2) Féval, having obtained S.'s consent, turned the unsuccessful play into a best-selling novel. (3) Sardou and Féval started to turn the novel back into a drama. (4) Sardou withdrew and Féval finished the job with one Anicet Bourgeois. Normally all this would have entranced me. To-day I found it dull.

8.56. The wireless news hints much, says little. The P.M. will not see the King to-night. To-morrow's Cabinet meeting has been cancelled, and the P.M. will make a statement in the House to-morrow. I thought I detected a defensive note in the plea that Ministers had neither threatened the King nor attempted unduly to hurry him, and that at no time had there been open or formal disagreement.

Dec. 7 Could not remain at home last night, so went *Monday*. down to Fleet Street and found the *D.E.* gnawing its fingers up to the knuckle. It had issued a poster with the words "No Decision." But a rival had gone one better with the placard

THE KING

A

DECISION

with the 'a' in very small type. Naturally the newsboys cried: "King's decision." Which meant that the rival paper mopped up all the sales. Hence the chagrin.

Jock is not seeing eye to eye with me in all this—he likes his Shakespeare in the past, whereas I have a use for it in the present and find the drama going on under my nose more exciting in fact, if less so in poetry. After all, there are rules of drama, and you know more or less how a play must end. Whereas not only is this one being played for the first time and we are spectators at a world-première, but also we can have no idea which ending the dramatist will choose. There isn't even a dramatist. We are looking on, so to speak, at a performance of the *commedia dell' arte*. Only

this is a tragedy, or may be. Discussing this to-day, Jock admitted that three hundred years ago he would have been more interested in a rising Jacobean playwright than in a sinking Armada.

In his speech in the House this afternoon Baldwin added nothing to what we read last night, and again this morning, except that his Majesty had broached the subject of the morganatic marriage "some weeks ago." The King is still at Fort Belvedere, and the general impression is that the situation is a little eased.

Dec. 8 I went last night to the Victoria Palace, leaving *Tuesday*. there at ten minutes to twelve, going straight home, and therefore just missing the midnight specials containing Mrs Simpson's statement that she is willing to withdraw from "a situation that has been rendered both unhappy and untenable." This morning the *Express* announces in headlines "The End of the Crisis." I do not think so. The statement says that the attitude is "unchanged," which can only mean that nothing is now declared which was not known before. The King, then, must still decide.

Two days ago my impulse was to hope the King would tell Mr Baldwin to write, call, speechify, resign, and be damned. I do not feel this now. I do not think anybody feels this now. I have just come across the painter Haydon's description of the Coronation of George IV. "Three or four of high rank appear from behind the throne; an interval is left; the crowd scarce breathe. Something rustles; and a being buried in satin, feathers and diamonds rolls gracefully into his seat. The room rises with a sort of feathered, silken thunder."

But the King is not a feathered darling. He is not a bird of paradise, but a man living in a world that is not paradise. His name stands first before his country's, carved in granite on enduring monuments throughout the length and breadth of the land. It is a king's part to do a king's duty.

Since all this started I have had the greatest difficulty in settling to my normal work. Jock openly opposes my writing this detailed account of something so wildly out of my province. Whereupon I charge him with puling æstheticism, which he admits if by that I mean being concerned more with the local than the world theatre: "My work, the arts, food and drink, my own affections and not anybody else's—that's all I'm going to bother about till the next war, when I shall probably be killed fighting for a country I'm not particularly fond of against one I probably like better!" I tell him that I consider this attitude despicable but honest.

Dec. 9 Waste! Waste! Waste! The secretary's cry
Wednesday. which ends Granville-Barker's tragedy brings
down the curtain on this one also. What of the
King himself? "Dispute it like a man," says Malcolm to
Macduff in his extremity. And Macduff answers, "I shall do
so; but I must also feel it as a man." If I write of this matter
as a dramatic critic, it is because I feel it as a dramatic critic.
Therefore I see the King as an actor in a world drama echoing
Antony's

Fall not a tear, I say; one of them rates
All that is won and lost: give me a kiss;
Even this repays me.

Dec. 11 So far as I am concerned, the King abdicated
Friday. when the news was announced over the wireless at
six o'clock last night. The ceremony, for such it
was, was moving. Baldwin came out of it very well. It
entirely cleared my mind of any possible doubts as to the
way in which this thing ought to be looked at. I see the
affair now in terms not of Shakespeare's Antony but of
Wells's Mr Polly, who, when Destiny tried to bully him,
stood up to Destiny:

Man comes into life to seek and find his sufficient beauty,
to serve it, to win and increase it, to fight for it, to face
anything and bear anything for it, counting death as
nothing so long as the dying eyes still turn to it. And fear
and dullness and indolence and appetite, which indeed are

no more than fear's three crippled brothers, who make ambushes and creep by night, are against him, to delay him, to hold him off, to hamper and beguile and kill him in that quest.

History will record that Edward VIII found the Kingship of England to be insufficient beauty.

Dec. 12 After the fall of the curtain at the Old Vic *St Saturday*. Denis, the producer of *The Witch of Edmonton*, said, "It is a pleasure to work with Miss Edith Evans, who is a great actress. She is a great actress in a great way." What else is this but a restatement of the first sentence in G. H. Lewes's essay on Edmund Kean: "The greatest artist is he who is greatest in the highest reaches of his art." Then how about that quality which Frederick Myers said was characteristic of Homer—"the sense of an effortless and absolute sublimity"? I suggest that the player who possesses this quality at once passes into the strict and narrow rank of great actors. There is no doubt that Edith Evans ranks as a great comic actress. Is she a great actress in the sense of effortless and absolute sublimity? If not, is it only because the sublime has not come her way? In any case, as Barrie's Cinderella said about the love-letter, "it's a very near thing."

Dec. 14 Savoy Grill for supper. Some highbrows maintaining that Michael Angelo's *David* was a bigger thing than David himself, I asked whether the Book of Genesis is bigger than the Creation.

Dec. 18 I am becoming quite a 'socialite.' (Horrid new *Friday*. vulgarism.) So much so that I have to refuse invitations owing to a previous 'alibi.' (How come the newspaper-boys to have missed that?) Lunched to-day with Harold Dearden, who is having to embark on a dictaphone (bad English is catching) owing to eye trouble. Dickie Clowes and Jock made up a boisterous party which went on till four.

Sat down again at 7.30. Moray McLaren was the host, and he entertained us delightfully in a private room at the Savile. Maurice Healy, Stéphan of the B.B.C., and a man called Felton were the other guests. We ate oysters, onion omelette, pheasant, and a savoury, and drank a Bâtard Montrachet, Krug 1928, Langoa-Barton 1912, and Sandeman's 1908. Subjects discussed: flagellation, fetishism, ghosts, and the superiority of Corneille to Racine. I don't agree. Sarah Bernhardt refused to act in Corneille's plays, holding that they were turgid to the point of imbecility. About the women she said that they were "hysterical quibblers, like provincial suffragettes, whereas the women of Racine remain women, however heroic their feelings."

Later Maurice repeated some of his epigrams, and I persuaded him to write one down:

INSCRIPTION FOR THE GATE OF A
WAR CEMETERY

Weep for all the handsome faces!
Earth had better hiding-places,
And those that hid, not those who died,
Are to-day their country's pride.

Home about two, and found I couldn't sleep, which is very rare with me. Turned on the light and read, rather guiltily, John Bailey's *Shorter Boswell*. I have often felt that I should like to abridge Dickens (deleting the sticky passages), so that the novels might be brought home to readers with very little time. I really cannot see greater vandalism here than in making gramophone records of excerpts out of operas for people who haven't time for Covent Garden. Would I take the story out of *Madame Bovary*, and leave only the style? No, but I'm sure I could shorten *L'Education Sentimentale* without anybody being the wiser, or sensibly poorer. The people who would kick up most fuss are, of course, those who have never read the book and don't intend to.

Heartened once again by Johnson's pronouncement that a man afflicted by distressing thoughts must divert and not combat with them. "To attempt to *think them down* is

madness." This was corroborated to-day by Dearden, who said that neuroses should be regarded no more than a chronic limp: "One should accept them, and carry on as though they were not there."

Dec. 21 An example of the Younger Generation. My *Monday*. friend Julian Phillipson, a Cambridge graduate born in the purple of commerce and serving his apprenticeship in one of our big stores, went home to Leeds on Thursday after a sharp bout of 'flu. Yesterday (Sunday) morning he started back from Leeds at nine o'clock exactly, driving a six-cylinder 20-h.p. Jaguar, and arrived in Oxford Circus at three minutes to one. He touched eighty miles an hour in places, and anyhow averaged fifty. He had not bothered about breakfast, and did not stop on the way. "It was courting death," I told him. "I felt like death," he said. On getting to town he at once went to a cocktail party, where he remained till eight o'clock drinking gin and whisky and eating one sardine and a piece of cake. He came to me for supper to-night, perfectly sober and in brilliant conversational form. The wireless announcing that a Spanish gunboat had stopped four Russian vessels to examine them for contraband of war *and had sunk one*, Julian said, "I might just as well have *averaged* eighty. We're all for it anyway."

Christmas Day My presents: Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, *Friday*. the new edition of Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, a gramophone record of Sibelius No. 2, a blotter, a coalscuttle, two bottles of champagne, six handkerchiefs, and a witch-ball. My presents to other people's kiddies included a miniature set of golf-clubs and a lion measuring four feet six inches and of such Obey-like benignity that I could hardly bear to part with it. The week's theatre-going: *Peter Pan*, two circuses, and three pantomimes. Something has gone wrong with Elsa Lanchester's Peter, which she has obviously conceived on the lines of her Ariel. It is not elfin but eerie, like some little boy cut off in the blossom of his youth, unhousel'd,

disappointed, unaneled. A sinister, green make-up hasn't improved matters. Charles Laughton's Hook falls short both in the pictorial and the scarifying quality; there should be something of eighteenth-century dandyism about this master-pirate. Hook should look like some old print, and doesn't.

A great batch of letters includes one from Horace Mills, the best Widow Twankey I ever saw. Never a riotous Dame, he brought out all the melancholy in that wringer-out of smalls, own sister to Pickwick's "Mrs Mudberry which kept a mangle and Mrs Bunkin which clear-starched." About the Manchester pantomime mentioned in *Ego H.M.* writes:

I have lively recollections of the production in which I played Abanazar—G. P. Huntley, George Graves and I dressed together, and a very hilarious trio we were. George Graves was the only member of the cast who was not afraid of Ada Reeve! (This is what our friend George would call "a rat-tat from the past.") It is strange that you should select Amy Height (a coloured singer) for special mention. Poor Amy! I remember she went into a theatrical store one day and asked for a stick of flesh colour—whereupon they handed her a stick of *black*—she was furious! Her end was a tragic one. She fell in the fire, having fallen asleep in her chair, and was burned to death.

An earlier Manchester pantomime, *Robinson Crusoe*, stands out with exceptional clearness in my memory, for it was here that I first met that incomparable artist Vesta Tilley. It has been my good fortune to be associated with most of the famous principal boys of my time, but, although they were, almost without exception, delightful ladies, there was only one Vesta Tilley. For sheer cleverness perhaps the palm must be awarded to Ada Reeve, but no one possessed the charm of Tilley. Off the stage she carried herself with a sort of gentle dignity, without a trace of affectation, and (rarest of virtues in the theatre) she was entirely unselfish. No wonder she is still spoken of as the outstanding star of her period.

I played a part which I had 'written in' called Swipes, the pot-boy. This was a sort of comic Smike, and went well with the Manchester audience. I remember I had a



Photo Tunbridge, Ltd.

Vesta Tilley

burlesque pathetic scene with Vesta Tilley in which she 'fed' me in a most good-natured manner. "You don't despise me," said Swipes with a sob, "because I've no shirt to my back?" "Of course not, my poor boy," said Robinson. "You don't despise me because I wear a ragged coat?" continued Swipes tearfully. "No, no. Don't cry, Swipes. Remember it's not the coat that makes the man." "No," sobbed Swipes, "it's the trousers!" My exit on this gag, weeping bitterly, always went well. That was nearly forty years ago.

Also a delightful letter from Lord Alfred Douglas, whom I have never met. This is about Wills, who wrote the play of *Charles the First* in which Irving was so unbearably moving, and how he has a painting by Wills of himself (A.D.) "at the age of three sitting up in bed in a frilled nightgown, and being at that period an infant of surpassing beauty." The letter also says of my little poem *Close the Dim Hearse* that it is frightfully good. Emily Dickenson be blowed. It is more like Beaumont and Fletcher." I am telling Jock, who is superior about my poetic gifts, to reserve his jibes till he gets a pat on the back from the greatest living master of the sonnet!

In my life I have written two poems only. The other was a translation from Huysmans, a very early idol. This appeared in *Buzz, Buzz!* and I am still inordinately proud of it. As that little book was pulped some fifteen years ago I give myself leave to reproduce the poem and the translation here:

A UNE CHANTEUSE

Un fifre qui piaule et siffle d'un ton sec,
Un basson qui nasille, un vieux qui s'époumonne
A cracher ses chicots dans le cou d'un trombonne,
Un violon qui tinte ainsi qu'on vieux rebec.

Un flageolet poussif dont on suce le bec,
Un piston grincheux, la grosse caisse qui tonne,
Tel est, avec un chef pansu comme une tonne,
Scrofuleux, laid enfin à tenir en échec

La femme la plus apte aux amoureuses lices,
L'orchestre du théâtre— Et c'est là cependant
Que toi, mon seul amour, toi, mes seules délices,

Tu brames tous les soirs d'infâmes ritournelles,
Et que, la bouche en cœur, l'œil clos, le bras pendant,
Tu souris aux voyous, ô la Reine des belles!

TO A MUSIC-HALL SINGER

Bassoon of the stopp'd nose and crazy flute,
Trombone which toothless age and worn-out lung
Blow until breath be spent, thereafter mule,
The whining fiddle and the whimpering tongue
Of rusty cornet, wheezing, whistling fife,
Loud blatant drum and, perched upon his stool,
The bellied leader, all his body rife
With foul disease and ugliness to cool
The woman aptest for the game of love:
Such are the players— Yet on this poor stage
You with hoarse ditty infinitely move
Me to the memory of old love and rage,
Whilst with red mouth and lax, luxurious mien
You tease pale cut-throats, O my Beauty's Queen.

This was written at Salon in the Bouches-du-Rhône in 1917. *Responsibility* was the third book I wrote during the War (*L. of C.* was the first), and I finished this in August 1918, at Luz la Croix Haute. I have never forgotten the thrill it gave me to write that name on the title-page.

It is odd how all my life I have always been doing things in other people's time. At my father's mill, when I was supposed to be learning to weave, I had a volume of Ibsen in the web-tin. At the Manchester office, when I should have been selling calico, I wrote, or pondered, dramatic criticism. In the Army I wrote three books. When I kept a shop, instead of attending to my customers, I wrote two more books. And now it takes all my will-power and a good bit of Jock's to keep me from writing this diary when I ought to be dictating the articles which are the loathsome, necessary bread and butter. Sibelius has long been granted a pension by the Finnish Government enabling him to dispense with hack-work. Who will grant me five thousand a year and so enable me to write untrammelled masterpieces?

Bowing Day Saturday. Another example of the way the amateur beats the professional at his own game. Devas Jones, my O.C. in France for a time, writes me from Nairobi: "It is blazing hot with a high, unaltered

blue sky." A professional would have written either 'unchanging' or 'changeless.'

Dec. 27 Lunched at Colville Hall, where Peter Page had *Sunday*. collected one of those parties whose very incongruity makes their success. C. R. W. Nevinson, the painter, and his wife; Princess Troubetzkoy and her brother; Mrs Akers-Douglas; and a delightful Belgian whose name I didn't catch. Also a young American journalist setting out to conquer London on his charm and enough money to last a fortnight. I wished him well and promised to do all I can to help him, with a mental reservation about lending him money. We played, for no stakes, a highly complicated game called "Monopoly" or some such name. All about real estate. The game was interrupted, as somebody's dog got lost. Wherefore the party, me excepted, set out to scour Essex in the dark. They returned two hours later without the dog and minus two of the guests, who had also got lost. As we didn't finish the game nobody won, and indeed I gleaned no idea of what constituted winning. Nevinson told us a good story about when he had double pneumonia. A publicity fiend rang up, and as the nurse was out of the room C.R.W. answered the 'phone, which was by his bedside. "Has he gone yet?" said a voice. "No," said C.R.W. "Give us a scoop when he does," said the voice, and rang off.

Dec. 31 The King's abdication has knocked the book *Thursday*. trade to pot. All the time it was going on the book-shops were *completely empty*, and at the very time when they expect to do best. Nevertheless, *Kingdoms for Horses* has sold 1985 copies, and *Ego* 2, 2112. Counting 112 of these as colonial sales, this means that the public has paid £1850 for my book up to date, of which my share is £227 10s. 0d. Nothing will shake my view that there is something wrong with the economics of a trade in which the cost of manufacture and distribution is six times greater than the cost of the raw material. Further, a book is not

raw material. It is material which the author has worked up to that state when nothing more has to be done to it than is beyond the power of a hand-press and a hand-cart.

My work for the year :

<i>Sunday Times</i>	...	...	100,000 words
<i>Tatler</i> ...	...	...	60,000 ,,
<i>Daily Express</i>	...	...	80,000 ,,
Pseudonym No. 1	...		60,000 ,,
Pseudonym No. 2	...		85,000 ,,
Pseudonym No. 3	...		80,000 ,,
<i>Ego 2</i> ...	...	...	80,000 ,,
<i>Ego 3</i> ...	...	...	40,000 ,,
Odd articles...	...	...	20,000 ,,
<hr/>			
			505,000

A falling-off from last year of 50,000 words. I must be getting lazy.

1937

Jan. 9 Diaries should have holidays like everybody else, *Saturday.* which is why I have given mine ten days. Nine, to be exact. Came down to Brighton principally to lunch with Lord Alfred Douglas, but found a wire at the hotel saying he was laid up with 'flu. Met Herbert Morgan, who regaled me, his daughter, and a chattersome lady whose name I did not catch, with oysters, champagne, and everything else of Sweeting's best. Having nothing to do this afternoon, my mind reverts to my undiared existence since the beginning of the year.

To making a resolution not to worry any more about growing old. There are compensations, as numberless dotards have pointed out. I am becoming as revolting a figure as ever stepped out of a bath. But if I didn't develop the 'middle-aged spread' my young stallion, Rose Knight, would never 'drop his middle,' which he must if he is to do any good at the shows this year. (I doubt whether Cicero pointed this out.) At the same time I am resolved to dress a little more tidily; old gentlemen ought to look clean. Also to remember something Brother Edward dug out for me the other day: "If so near a prospect of the other world, as forty or fifty years, cannot restrain men from the greatest villainies, what would they do if they could as reasonably suppose death to be three or four hundred years off?" (Dr William Sherlock, 1641-1707.)

To making a further resolution, which is to suffer the younger generation a little more gladly: "The mind has a different relish, as well as the palate; and you will as fruitlessly endeavour to delight all men with riches or glory as

you would to satisfy all men's hunger with cheese or lobsters." (John Locke. Also sent by Edward.) I spent a recent evening reading a good part of the trial of Bardell v. Pickwick and all the best Micawber bits to Julian Phillipson, my very modern young friend. He did not smile once! He then told me that his interest lay almost entirely in the future, and that if any of it was in the past it was certainly not the Victorians. I see that in to-day's *Observer* St John Ervine pretends (claims) to have met a young woman of twenty-one who had never heard of Patti, Sims Reeves, Alexander, Mrs Kendal, Dan Leno, Beerbohm Tree, Wyndham, Kitchener, Roberts, French, Ludendorff, Joffre, Asquith, Haldane, Balfour. I can only believe this on the theory that in Devonshire all young women of twenty-one are deaf and blind. Julian is not in this category. He has a bright, inquisitive brain, at Cambridge did very well in History and English Literature, but just will not have the Victorians, which means Dickens, and the Edwardians, which means Kipling. I now resolve, whenever this crops up, to bear in mind my own blind spots, which are Chaucer, Thackeray (except *Vanity Fair*), Hawthorne, all modern poetry of the Auden-Eliot-Pound school, and both Lawrences.

To passing a jolly Sunday evening at the home of Denys Blakelock's father, who has built three churches on the same spot—first a wooden shanty, replaced by a tin building, and now by a noble edifice of brick. A large-minded Church of England clergyman who lives in amity with two sons who have gone over to the Roman Catholic faith. The Vicar told me how Muswell Hill was made by the murderers Milsom and Fowler. Thousands flocked to the scene of the crime, and among them speculators who spotted something doing in the building line. Among the first erections was the little wooden church. There was a delicious supper of the cold beef order—no kickshaws—and after the Vicar had gone to bed we (being Denys, his brother Alban, Alban's wife, and myself) sat up late talking our best metaphysics.

To paying a second visit to the circus. Mills came and sat

in my box, talked a great deal about the kindness of animal trainers, and produced one convincing argument against any possibility of cruelty at Olympia. At least five hundred persons, belonging to firms not under his control, have free passes enabling them to go anywhere and everywhere. Would not these, and the scores of servants dismissed for indiscipline, drunkenness, and so forth, come forward with evidence of ill-treatment of the animals if they had ever seen any? Yet none of the humane societies has ever been able to produce jot or tittle of such evidence. I believe English animal-training is vindicated up to the hilt. But what about those descriptions—mostly, perhaps, in novels about Continental circus-life—of the way tigers and their kind are induced to sit on stools by being hit hard on the nose and then jerked on to their haunches by chain and pulley? Is it possible that such descriptions lie? This is one of those things about which one just has to be ‘in the know.’ On the other hand, he would be a fool who thought our Bertram was not in the know about his own circus.

To inviting Marie Tempest to lunch at Quinto’s, and forgetting to turn up! This produced the only sign of growing old that I have ever been able to detect in this overthrower of Time—she forgives more easily than she did in her musical-comedy days!

Jan. 11 Yet another example of the amateur beating the professional. I devoured half a penholder trying to find out why Edna Best wasn’t a good Cinderella. Imagine my disgust when somebody asked Gladys Henson what she thought of the performance and Gladys replied, “She just didn’t want to go to the ball!”

Jan. 12 Came in last night at ten minutes to twelve and *Tuesday*. turned on the wireless. (Fred has instructions to leave it set for Germany before he goes to bed.) In a minute or so the room was flooded with *Tristan*, after

which we had "Wahn, Wahn" from the *Meistersinger*, the Faust overture, Wotan's "Farewell," and Siegfried's "Trauermarsch." You may say that this is just an ordinary programme from the Promenade Concerts, or that they are only gramophone records. But neither gives me the sensation of there being nothing except music in the world, which this wireless stuff does when it is late at night and I am alone.

Jan. 18 Just as I was sallying forth to consume a *Wednesday*. digestive biscuit and a glass of milk prior to a medical examination for insurance purposes a 'phone message came for me to lunch with Herbert Morgan. Potted shrimps, boiled salmon, asparagus, Bollinger, brandy, and a foot of cigar. "It's a magnificent ruin!" said the doctor, tapping at what I still call my chest. And again, "The quality's good, even if the fabric's impaired." This reminded me of what is almost my favourite quotation in the whole of Hazlitt: "In that prodigious prosing paper, the *Times*, which seems to be written as well as printed by a steam-engine, Mr Kemble is compared to the ruin of a magnificent temple, in which the divinity still resides. This is not the case. The temple is unimpaired; but the divinity is sometimes from home." (I am conscious of having quoted this in an earlier volume. But if I have, I do not apologize. It will do nobody any harm to read this passage again; I have read it fifty times.) The doctor asking me if my consumption of alcohol was moderate, I said, "My lord and jury, I won't deceive you"; and he said, "You had better not!" As I was driving home along the Goswell Road I wondered whether there is anything in Dunne's Theory of Time, and whether it was *because* I was going to be driven home along the Goswell Road that I thought of Mrs Cluppins. I noticed, also in the Goswell Road, a shop sign belonging to a firm of briar-pipe manufacturers—"Vuillard and Strauss." Almost my favourite painter and almost my favourite composer.

Jan. 14 Another step in the progress of 'alibi':
 Thursday.

This is how the situation looked to Mrs Gaskell. She considered it carefully. These Brontë sisters had been three unmarried ladies when they wrote. They should not have known about men and the mistresses they had. They should not have let their heroines love men who tossed off bigamy like a drink, or who went mad with frustration over a woman married to another man. So, she brought Branwell up out of his sordid grave covered with drunken memories and a tainted delight in them. Branwell must have told his maiden sisters all about men. It was an alibi. (*We Write as Women*, by Margaret Lawrence.)

Jan. 15 Box at Covent Garden with Peter Page and Noel
 Friday. Arnott. *Gianni Schicchi* and *Salome*. Both lovely
 in their entirely different ways, Puccini ejaculating
 three times, and Strauss maintaining almost unbearable
 tension until the supreme and final spasm.

Jan. 16 Brother Edward, who is recovering from 'flu,
 Saturday. writes to say that he is going to make a change
 in his post-'flu literary diet. Normally this is
 a re-reading of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. This time he
 promises himself Donne's *Biathanatos*, or *Vindication of
 Suicide* (1651): "I am convinced this is one of the finest
 books in the English language."

Rooting about to-day in some of my old papers, Jock found a page torn out of the *Musical Standard* for Nov. 2, 1907. This has a two-column review by Joseph Holbrooke of Edward's *Sechs Lieder*. These are the songs referred to in the fourth stanza of "Edward's Journey" (*Ego* 2, p. 409). Holbrooke says that the composer of these songs "has, to my mind, a great genius. It is revealed in his harmony, in his most original atmosphere, and, greatest of all, in his melodies . . . If I say that the third song, *Parting*, rivals Mr Delius in passion, this should be sufficient to those who know those works." I believe John Coates sang one of the songs at a recital at the Bechstein Hall in 1906. Now they are what Ethel Monticue calls "piffle before the wind," and

I don't suppose Edward ever thinks of them. It is just like him to compose stuff which, at that date, only Coates could sing—Ernest Newman in the *Manchester Guardian* called his harmony “modern of the moderns”—and no amateurs could play. Edward has always been very difficult to encourage. How on earth is one to presume to encourage a man who, for a New Year's card, sends you the fly-leaf of a pocket-diary annotated like this :

PERSONAL MEMORANDA

Telegraphic Address.	MORT.
No. of Bank Book.	Ce que tu voudras.
No. of Watch.	J'ai le temps.
No. of Car.	Tu ris ?
No. of Stores Ticket.	Moi, je ris aussi.

INSURANCE. (Qu'est-ce que c'est ?)

Accident.	Peu m'importe !
Burglary.	Mais voyons !
Fire.	Et l'Enfer ?
Motor-car.	On m'attribue deux jambes.
Servants.	Pour moi, tous es habitants de la terre.
Life.	Mais je suis mort !

Jan. 17 Twenty-fifth Anniversary Dinner of the Three *Sunday*. Arts Club, Herbert Morgan in the chair. The chief speakers were Sir William Llewellyn, Dame Laura Knight, and Lilian Braithwaite. I did my best, and they seemed to like it. Plenty of laughs, but poor stuff by Edward's standard. Took for theme the *discouragement* of mediocrity and the necessity for throwing cold water on the talentless.

Jan. 19 Noel Arnott took me to dinner at Brook's. He is *Tuesday*. the last of the dandies, and has his shoe-laces ironed every morning ! A good talker. Said of a well-known gold-digger : “ One to hang from a trapeze and thrash with boughs of holly, but not one to dine with or talk to.” Covent Garden empty for the ever-delightful *Hansel and Gretel*. Unnecessary to allege the 'flu, St Moritz, or the

recent set-back of a certain section of society, but the plain fact that Society as a whole has no taste for Opera except in May. Had the performance taken place in a swamp at Runnymede, with baronesses waving copies of Magna Charta at each other from rafts, every Thames steamer would have been crowded with peeresses with their tiaras trailing behind in tugs.

Jan. 21 Dined last night at Scott's with Clifford Bax, *Thursday*. Meum Stewart, and a Mrs Blanche, an artist.

Best potted shrimps and talk I have tasted for a long time. Went back to C.B.'s flat in Albany and stayed till very late. They took me up to see some of the lady's paintings—women bisected lengthways and grafted on to halves of violoncellos; wicker dummies fully crinolined, but with a punch-ball for head and boxing-gloves for hands; cornucopias spilling ladies' gloves—the whole done in salmon pink, and *très* Regency. Asked if I liked it, I said it affected me like Sitwellian poetry. Asked if I liked Sitwellian poetry, I said it affected me like Alban Berg's music, and was no further harried. Clifford showed me his Sims picture, which he says he understands, as he knows the next world intimately. Was quite positive about the smallest details. Long talk about Buddhism. Clifford offered to put on a gramophone record of somebody dead speaking at a spiritualist séance. As it was two o'clock I flatly refused to hear it. Happening to mention having read some new theory, according to which Cause and Effect, not directly connected, rotate round one another like spots on a rapidly revolving cone and result in no more than a confluence of probabilities, I said this would mess up one's notions of morality. Clifford said, "Some of us have done that already, James."

Jan. 24 Heard this concert at Covent Garden :

Sunday.

Symphony No. 40 in G minor	Mozart
Piano Concerto in E Minor ...	Chopin
Symphony <i>Eroica</i>	Beethoven

The pianist was Kilenyi, new to me, and, I thought, not much more than a boy. I don't know whether he was nervous. I was. But he got through it and, as cricket reports say, was unbeaten at the end. Beecham was in great form in the *Eroica*, now like a lion striding out of its cave, now like a mouse peering out of its hole, by turns a boxer bringing over his left, a bayonet fighter, a Regency buck mincing it in the Mall. He didn't conduct the Symphony: he danced it. But is Beethoven ever finicky? I like mine a bit rougher, more German and less French. But the last movement was ecstatic—a long way the other side of the sunset.

Jan. 26 Arthur Prince, who murdered William Terriss at
Tuesday. the stage-door of the Adelphi Theatre forty years ago, died in Broadmoor Asylum yesterday.

Jan. 28 The musical unanimity of London is something
Thursday. to marvel at. Either everybody is banging and scraping away or there isn't a note to be heard. To-night, for example, there wasn't a sound, except at the Philharmonic for a Mozart-Beecham programme, all seats, of course, sold long before I knew what the week's plays would be. I just managed to squeeze into Sadler's Wells for *The Barber*. They were the last seats in the house, or I couldn't have made any use of my free evening. Glad I went, because it gave me the opportunity to be gorgeously rude to the *Times* critic for the stuff he recently wrote about *Salome*. Still worse is the unanimity about rare works. Either you are not given the chance to hear *Les Troyens* at all, or they have simultaneous Sunday performances at the Albert and Queen's Halls, while at the Palladium somebody else does the *Symphonie Fantastique*. After which Berlioz is allowed to sleep for seventeen years.

Jan. 30 Part of a letter from Brother Edward:
Saturday.

You who are such a devotee of Samuel Johnson should dip into his Dictionary. There you will find such definitions as:

Pension: An allowance made to any one without an equivalent. Pay give to a state-hireling for treason to his country.

For the sake of this, I have almost forgiven the author his coarse insensibility to Gray, his denial of the efficacy of travel as a mind-broadener, his pronouncement about the barbarity of the Greeks, and his opinion of Leibnitz—"as paltry a fellow as I know." And I have quite forgiven him all the fuss he made about a flea-jump to the Hebrides, which he considered a more prodigious feat than Marco Polo's travels to Tartary or Herodotus's world-wanderings, for such remarks as: "*The Courtier*, by Castiglione, is the best book that was ever written upon good breeding," or "Edinburgh Castle would make a good prison in England." And this leads to the question of Boswell. Let us give Macaulay a rest and read Carlyle's essay on Boswell. As the Doctor would say: "I have never read it: but I intend to read it; and you may read it."

Jan. 31 Dined in Montpelier Square with Ernest Helme, Sunday. still as much the ferocious dilettante as he was dashing Colonel of Carmarthenshire miners during the War. Said he was never nervous when in command. "I suppose it comes from my mother's side and being accustomed to doing things in public. Or perhaps it's a kind of vulgarity. In the last three weeks my battalion lost forty-nine officers and nine hundred men. Lots of them died in my arms. In spite of this I enjoyed the War immensely; it was awful fun."

E.H.'s mother and all his aunts were actresses. Mrs Helme played with Irving in an early piece called *Uncle Dick's Darling*. He showed me a portrait of an aunt who was brought on by Ristori as one of Medea's children. Among his treasures are Irving's snuff-box in *The Bells*, the castanets of Galli-Marié, the original Carmen, and the riding-whip used by Hortense Schneider in *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein*. Three grand thrills! A good evening, during which I listened brilliantly—how in the Lesson Scene in *The Barber of Seville* Patti sang *Il Bacio*, *Una Voce*, and *Home, Sweet Home*, how a famous American

prima donna had unlimited impertinence and no voice, etc., etc. Drank at least my share of a magnum of Lanson 1926 plus some '75 brandy, and smoked the longest and largest Partaga ever grown.

Feb. 1 Read in the *Times* about some proposal to *Monday*. abolish the phrase 'domestic servant,' and substitute 'domestician.' What nonsense! An undertaker has the same ghastly function whether you call him that or a 'mortician.' I remember a witty Grand Guignol farce in which in the course of twenty years a kitchen-maid was promoted to waitress, housekeeper, mistress, wife. As the curtain came down she said, "Quand-même, c'est toujours moi qui vide le vase de nuit!"

This rubbish about a servant's title reminded me of last night's dining-table, to whose mahogany E.H. said a footman has devoted an hour and a half daily during the two hundred years it has been in his family. That, in my view, is what servants are for, and I disapprove of chromium plating and all other labour-saving devices. The function of your french-polisher is to polish; he should know nothing about French.

Feb. 2 Eiluned Lewis's wedding, before which Hamish *Tuesday*. Hamilton gave a luncheon party at the Jardin des Gourmets. Jimmie Horsnell said he thought that curtains should fall at the end of the ceremony and the bride be whisked out of sight, as at the other place. Somebody said: "Into an ardentorium." Eiluned, looking with her red hair the perfect Rossetti, came down the aisle chattering like a magpie. I had to make a speech at the reception, and fortunately remembered a recent story which ended, "Everybody lived happily ever after except the bride and bridegroom."

Feb. 5 Saw in Gower Street a magnificent figure of an old *Friday*. man well over six feet, and weighing, I guessed, sixteen stone. He had his back to the car, but from a hundred yards away I said, "Falstaff." All *Henry*

IV, Part 2, was in the manner in which he held his stick, stoutly, and well away from him. As we passed I noted his wretched apparel and shoes tied with string. Then I looked back, and saw the noblest countenance I have ever seen, set in a white frame of beard and whisker. Now I know what Fuseli meant when he said that a beggar in the hands of Michael Angelo "rose the Patriarch of Poverty."

Feb. 6 Seymour Hicks rang up to ask if I will join the *Saturday*. Garrick Club. O vision entrancing! How all the other passions fleet to air!

Feb. 8 At lunch to-day Charles Laughton and Elsa came *Monday*. over to my table for coffee. C. talked a lot about Hollywood and how film-actors take their art more seriously than their colleagues in the theatre: "The nearest thing to the atmosphere of the studio is a monastery." This entirely contradicts my notion of Hollywood as a bathing-pool where the Claudette Colberts spend their non-filming time taking headers into milk.

Feb. 9 Luncheon at Lord Kemsley's house in Queen Anne *Tuesday*. Street for the purpose of kissing hands on the change of proprietorship, Lord K. taking half the papers, including the *Sunday Times*, and Lord Camrose the other half, including the *Daily Telegraph*. Round the table, clockwise, were Kemsley, Ernest Newman, Desmond MacCarthy, Cyril Lakin (Literary Editor), Herbert Sidebotham ("Scrutator"), Herbert Morgan (Advertising), Beverley Baxter ("Atticus"), Valentine Heywood (Assistant Editor), R. C. K. Ensor (Leader-writer), self, and W. W. Hadley (Editor). A very good party, with some stiff quips. Afraid I annoyed Baxter by suggesting that Pope had said the best thing about his column:

Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?

But then I can never resist an opening.

Feb. 11 Our young English actresses are always complaining that they can't get hold of star parts and good plays. Yet when *Candida* is revived an American film-star appears in the lead. Why? Foreign actresses, implored to give us a more extended taste of their quality, don't. All through Ann Harding's performance I found myself harking back to the surge and roll of Janet Achurch's performance of forty years ago, and hearing the sunken bell of her "That's a good bid, Eugene!" I came across a perfect criticism of Harding's performance in something Professor Morley wrote in the sixties about the actress always known as "Miss Bateman":

Miss Bateman shows little original ability, save when she has to give pathetic expression to her voice. She has almost no range. Her American intonation adds to the natural monotony of her delivery, although its nasal tendency may lend itself to the effect of those pathetic tones which are her one strong recommendation to the public favour. When she is loud or swift, or anything but pathetic, she is never thoroughly expressive. Miss Bateman's notion always is to settle herself into some quiet, well-looking attitude, and save herself all awkwardness by keeping in it as long as possible, as if she were standing for a *carte de visite*, before an exceedingly unsusceptible plate, and wouldn't have a hair stir till the cap is clapped over the lens.

Feb. 12 Eddie Marsh, retiring after forty years of being *Friday*. Private Secretary to Everybody, becomes Sir Edward. Any millionaire can be a Mæcenas; Eddie has been that richer thing, an unmoneyed Mæcenas.

Feb. 14 Lunched at Hove with Lord Alfred Douglas, *Sunday*. whom I met for the first time. A very gracious and pleasant meal with A.D., obviously best side out. Plenty of lively talk and still more lively listening (me). I thought that after the War the old story would die down. But it doesn't. Sherard has just produced an enormous pail of whitewash, A.D.'s point here being that

Wilde in Paris continued his devices more extravagantly than ever. Told me that A. J. A. Symons is to produce yet another book on O.W. this year, and that it is very well done and perfectly authenticated. He also told me that everything Wilde wrote after *Dorian Gray* and excepting *De Profundis* was written when A.D. was living in the same house with him, and generally in the same room, or else when he was a daily visitor: "He used to read bits of *The Importance of Being Earnest* as he wrote them down, now and again incorporating something I had said, when we would both roar with laughter." I came away with the notion that, as between Ross and Harris, there was precious little to choose. My impression of A.D. was that he has mellowed. I think I should like a little of him very much.

Feb. 15 The more I read, hear, and learn about Viardot-Monday. Garcia (*Ego*, pp. 83-84, 87, 88) the more I am impressed. A fortnight ago Ernest Helme was recalling how she had read the part of Isolde at sight, with Wagner accompanying her on the piano. In his *Reminiscences* Charles Santley wrote: "No woman in my day has approached Madame Viardot as a dramatic singer; she was perfect, as far as it is possible to attain perfection, both as singer and actress. The only man worthy to rank with her was Ronconi." To-day in Weingartner's *Reminiscences* I come across this:

The afternoon gatherings at the Hofgartnerei (at Weimar) were fuller than usual. The famous singer Pauline Viardot-Garcia was among them. She had long retired from the stage. I was particularly interested in her, because she had Mozart's own manuscript of *Don Juan*. She was my neighbour one night at dinner. Her German was perfect, with no foreign accent at all.

Have just come back from the Empress Stadium, where it took Jack Doyle six rounds to dispose of Harry Staal, champion of Holland and a fighter whose only notion of boxing is to use his arms like the sails of one of his country's windmills. He stood an immense amount of punishment,

and either he has a granite jaw or Doyle has no punch. The Irishman's record looks better than it is. 14 wins, 1 defeat, 2 disqualifications. All the wins by the K.O. route in an average of well under 2 rounds. Against this must be put the fact that he has never been matched against even a third-rater, while Buddy Baer, a fifth-rater, put him out in one round. He weighs fifteen stone, is six foot three and fairly good-looking, and said to be able to sing. Mass and Press hysteria will probably make a hero of him. In my view a boxer of even Beckett's class would beat him with one hand.

A charming letter waiting at home from an anonymous correspondent, and having this postscript: "Writing this in a public library. The old men's faces are dead, the young are all pre-Raphaelites."

And another letter asking whether I cannot do something to secure greater historical accuracy in films: "The other afternoon my two sons sat through *The Charge of the Light Brigade* with eyes like oysters. And I feel that they will go to their graves believing that the Indian Mutiny took place before the Crimean War."

Feb. 16 Lunched to-day with Esmé Percy, who told me *Tuesday*. an excellent story. One of his friends gave a dinner-party at which some pup from Oxford lit a cigarette immediately after the soup. "Bring coffee," said the host. The butler brought coffee, and the meal ended.

Feb. 22 On Sunday had a look at the horses, having got *Monday*. rid of Diamond, and so reduced my stud to two—

Ego and the young stallion, Rose Knight. Found both in great fettle. Rose Knight, who will not be three years old for another six months, looks like having a lot of action; he was a magnificent goer as a foal. But either it is my fancy or he is growing *plain*.

Albert showed me the last number of the American magazine *Sportologue*. This has an account of the four-year-old

pony mare Highland Cora: "This grand young filly has, besides the carriage of a queen, unusually balanced action, and an indescribable 'it,' which is essential in the general make-up of a show-horse champion." Highland Cora is by that great pony King of the Plain. But what interests me is that her dam is Skirbeck Cora, which I bought as she came out of the ring at the Olympia Show of 1919. This makes the third of my animals which have done well for other people. I gave £150 for my first show pony, Talke Princess, whose first foal, Axholme Venus, was sold for £2500! Vortex, bought me for 14 guineas, got Rainbow, sold for £3000. And now Cora, for whom I paid £200, at the age of seventeen does herself proud by giving birth to Highland Cora, who, if she is as good as *Sportologue's* description, and goes as well as her photograph, should be worth a mint of money.

Feb. 28 Seymour Hicks having written hinting at certain
Tuesday. difficulties about my election to the Garrick, and
 Darlington, who was to have proposed me, corroborating, I dispatched this:

22 Antrim Mansions, N.W.3

DEAR SEYMOUR,

28rd February, 1936

I gather from your letter and Darlington's that there is a considerable amount of opposition to my election. If at any time the Committee, being unanimous, should invite me to join the Club I shall be proud and happy to become a member.

But I have no intention of being snubbed by some worm-eaten old gentleman who would probably have blackballed Garrick himself. Nor do I intend to give some extremely bad actor a toothsome bit of revenge. After all, I haven't asked to join the Club! So let us drop the whole thing.

I will lunch with you with the greatest pleasure whenever and wherever you like, including the Garrick.

Yours as before,

JAMES AGATE

Feb. 26 My Dreyfus play, over which I spent the autumn *Friday.* of 1980, has cropped up again. This began as a translation, at the request of Gilbert Miller, of a play by Hans Rehfisch and Wilhelm Herzog. My German being none too good, Brother Edward was first employed to make a literal version of the text, which, in the best German manner, turned out to be at once thorough and woolly. So much so that neither I nor Jock could make head or tail of it. The actual case contained over ten thousand documents, eight hundred of which were subsequently admitted to be forgeries. It seemed as though the whole lot figured in this play! Finally we whittled these documents down to five. I was at Beaconsfield at the time, and I well remember how we spent—and when I had to go to the theatre how Edward and Jock spent—every evening of a lovely October making a map of the case, with all the scenes in the play in heaps on the floor, between which we crawled on hands and knees very much as I have always supposed railway directors must do when they lay out a time-table. Unfortunately somebody then popped up with a Dreyfus film, and my translation, which by that time had become an adaptation, was shelved.

It has cropped up again because Germans never let go, and because Oscar Homolka wants to play Zola. In the interval Dr Rehfisch had altered his original version, and ten days ago I get a letter asking me to incorporate the alterations in my play, which I thought was lost, but has apparently been lying in a play-agent's safe. Dr Johnson says somewhere that there are two kinds of knowledge—knowing a thing and knowing where to find out about a thing. It is the same with jobs of work. I immediately lure George Mathew to Birmingham, ostensibly to look at the horses, but actually to take my play to pieces and put it together again with the new additions. As it has been made like a watch, this will be rather like adding extra wheels to something that is already going round. However, George does what is wanted more skilfully and expeditiously than I had thought possible, and I shall come back after the week-end with a masterpiece in which Rehfisch, Herzog, Brother Edward, Alan Dent, George

Mathew, and J.A. have all had a share. Nevertheless, the programme—if ever there is a programme—will announce that the play is by me!

Mar. 1 Formerly slang was working-class and worked its *Monday.* way up. To-day it is the other way about. Peter

Page tells me that at 8 A.M. this morning, putting on trousers and dressing-gown, he descended four flights and asked a navvy breaking up Berkeley Street whether this row was to go on all night. The navvy said, "Definitely!"

Mar. 2 It must be obvious to every thinking person that *Tuesday.* the validity of our notions about immortality must depend upon the correctness of our ideas about Time. I have long thought that, whatever is the nature of Time, it is not like a piece of string in which the years are marked by knots, making Infinity just more and more string. I cannot see why the Past and the Future have not as much right to exist as the Present, and at some place in which all is Now. It is probably wrong to talk of Time existing in a 'place,' and 'state' doesn't make it much easier. We feel the necessity for borrowing a word from another dimension, which implies that Time is part of that other dimension. It may even be the dimension itself. Since I have been thinking along these lines for some years, judge of my delight to find a forty-page essay on the subject tucked away at the end of Priestley's new book, *Midnight on the Desert*, ostensibly an account of a stay in Arizona. If J.B., following Hinton and Dunne and Ouspensky, has got anywhere near the truth, here is the biggest enlarger of life since the birth of the Christian religion. It would mean, of course, not only the end of annihilation and that odiously second-best reunion with the general stream, but the abolition of rewards and punishments except in so far as Man brings about his own. For the consequences of Man's virtuous, vicious, and foolish acts now become inescapable since he is compelled to repeat them for ever. What Man has done for good or ill cannot on this theory be undone: his acts do not repeat

themselves, but just go on being. Jack has tremendous notions about a fifth dimension, in which imaginative truth becomes real—a limbo in which Lamb can have his Dream Children and Barrie's Dearth his daughter—and even about a sixth, in which the past by stupendous effort may be amended. He does not deal with whether it may be worsened!

Mar. 4 A peculiarly murky morning.

Thursday. 9.0. John Gielgud, returned from America, wakes me up with a 'phone call, which, however, is not for me, but for Jock.

10.0. Jock arrives, early but quipless.

10.5. Open letters and find one from Seymour regretting my withdrawal from the Garrick, but admitting the existence of "one or two objectors who are not to be got over."

10.15. Consider books to take away for week-end reviewing—a lugubrious lot which includes *The Family Skeleton*, *Murder on Manœuvres*, *Death Took a Greck God*, *Death at Screaming Pool*, and *The Dormouse Undertaker*.

1.30. Lunch with Sam Eckman of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, a delightful fellow whose idiosyncrasy is to drink a liqueur brandy and smoke a cigar immediately before lunch and without having had breakfast. As we sit down Sam says, "Is that a Garrick Club tie you're wearing, James? I'm dining there to-night. Are you?"

James replies that it isn't and he isn't.

Mar. 6 Frank Vosper is dead, and the theatre is the *Saturday*. poorer for a rare spirit, but also a strange one.

Vosper was splenetic, rash, fastidious, and possessed of a quality of pride for which the English language has no sufficient word. He was full of what Corneille meant by *orgueil*. His friends have always known him for a man who had made up his mind about what things in an inferior world he would brook, and what not. As an actor Vosper was versatile and interesting, though he had a curious quality of amateurishness. Watching him, you felt that anybody quite so professional must be an amateur! He began

as a good-looking *jeune premier*, and was for some seasons dangerously near to being a *matinée* idol. In my view his two best pieces of acting were Mr Dulcimer in *The Green Bay Tree*, and the murderer in his own play, *Love from a Stranger*. He was an odd, fantastic creature who lived in a day-dream with Arabian nights, and did not so much fly into passions as occasionally desist from a state of irascible ecstacy. As a playwright he was first and foremost a craftsman. Lacking the power to conceive a plot, his handling of the plots of others was masterly. He made a beautiful little piece out of May Sinclair's *The Combined Maze*, a first-rate thriller out of Agatha Christie's *Love from a Stranger*, and he turned the Thompson-Bywaters case into a highly moving drama of the imagination called *People Like Us*. His pre-occupation with crime was intense, and one felt that, whereas he would have hunted with the detectives, his interest would have run with the murderer. I doubt whether he would have agreed that prevention is better than crime.

Mar. 11 Graham Browne, Marie Tempest's husband, died *Thursday*. this morning of double pneumonia. He had a bad attack of it a year ago, and only just pulled round. Willie did not claim to be a great actor. But he was a highly competent one, and would have been a *raisonneur* of the Pinero type if the comedies in which he appeared had been weighty enough to bear reasoning about. As a producer he was consistency itself, and took care that plays should be consistent with themselves. He was an extraordinarily good judge of acting, never threw cold water on what one admired, and was the first to point out some seed of goodness neglected or overlooked. His loyalty to his friends was remarkable, and his patience with fools limitless. He took his work, both as actor and producer, with great seriousness, but lightly, and his prevailing cast of humour was well expressed when he said, "My Rosencrantz was not up to much, but my Guildenstern was immense!" But for Willie's unfailing equanimity and braking power, Mary would have worn herself out long ago. High-powered machinery cannot

run permanently at top speed, and Willie's best claim upon the theatre of his time is that he nursed a miraculous little engine and kept it running.

Mar. 17 Dinner to Eddie Marsh at the Mayfair.
Wednesday. Winston Churchill in the chair. About 150 people. Literature was represented by Wells, Binyon, Lascelles Abercrombie, Professor Trevelyan, Edmund Blunden, Walter de la Mare, Beverley Nichols, Rose Macaulay, G. B. Stern, Richard Church, Desmond MacCarthy, Dick Shanks, John Drinkwater; art by Duncan Grant, Paul Nash, Munnings, Muirhead Bone, Teddie Wolfe, Rex Whistler, Albert Rutherston; drama by Cochran, Charles Morgan, St John Ervine, Viola Tree, Mary Ellis, and Lord Lytton. In my speech on behalf of the theatrical profession I began by quoting something a great lady said about me the other day: "James Agate is always amusing, readable, and sound—but he is vulgar." In view of the audience I expected to be nervous, but wasn't, and don't think I ever spoke better..

Mar. 22 Maugham's new novel, *Theatre*, has made me Monday. very angry. It is a matter not of morals, but of manners. Rachel was a slut. But she was an august slut who thought nobly of her art. Julia Lambert is a bitch, and a common bitch, and I just do not believe that great art goes with commonness and bitchery.

Julia considers the possibility of playing Hamlet :

"I wonder if I'm too old to play Hamlet. Siddons and Sarah Bernhardt played him. I've got better legs than any of the men I've seen in the part. I'll ask Charles what he thinks. Of course there's that bloody blank verse. Stupid of him not to write it in prose. Of course I might do it in French at the Français. God, what a stunt that would be ! "

And about Phèdre :

The agony that she had suffered when Tom deserted her recalled to her memory Racine's Phèdre which she had

studied as a girl with old Jane Taitbout. She read the play again. The torments that afflicted Theseus' queen were the torments that afflicted her, and she could not but think that there was a striking similarity in their situations. That was a part she could act; she knew what it felt like to be turned down by a young man one had a fancy for. Gosh, what a performance she could give!

But Julia had always felt that Racine made a great mistake in not bringing on his heroine till the third act.

"Of course I wouldn't have any nonsense like that if I played it. Half an act to prepare my entrance if you like, but that's ample."

Slut though Rachel may have been, I do not feel that she approached the masterpieces in this spirit. What I miss in Julia is the reverence for genius, a quality without which no actress has ever been *great*. I do not believe that Rachel ever thought of Phèdre in terms of 'bloody Alexandrines,' which is the equivalent of Julia's "bloody blank verse." Why not have called the book *Grease Paint*, and leave greatness out of the argument? ¹

Mar. 28 Charles Wyndham's centenary. I saw him twice *Tuesday*. only. Once in *David Garrick*, when I took an immense dislike to his voice. I never heard such abominable croaking until I was kept awake by the frogs of Arles. Quite a wave of melancholy comes over me as I write this sentence. The balmy Provençal night, the absence of anything to do, the lassitude that was not quite boredom, the café with its eternal click of dominoes, the unique courtesan so much more reserved than the other Arlésiennes, the pow-wows with Devas Jones, now in East Africa taming lions, for it is certain they have never tamed him. . . . But all this has nothing to do with Wyndham. I hated him even more in

¹ In the *Sunday Times* for Jan. 16th, 1938, Desmond MacCarthy writes about Maugham's *Theatre*: "Though an amusing book, the theme was trivial. He tried to disguise its triviality by presenting his heroine as an imaginative actress of the first order, as a Duse, a Sarah, an Ellen Terry. But it was impossible to believe she was more than a capable vaudeville actress."

a wretched thing called *Rosemary* (it was probably quite a pretty piece). I must have been in my twenties, and Wyndham's visits to Manchester were rare. I badly wanted to see him in a typical Wyndham part, Sir Christopher Deering in *The Liars*, or Sir Daniel Carteret in *Mrs Dane's Defence*, and here I was fobbed off with sentimental stuff about an old dodderer of ninety with, I vengefully noted, the plump hands of middle age. (The only other comparable attack of fury I remember was when Forbes-Robertson played the same trick on me with the preposterous *Mice and Men*.) It follows that I never saw Wyndham at anything like his best.

Mar. 27 John Drinkwater's death was the result, it is Saturday. thought, of a heart attack brought on by the excitement of the Boat Race. He was fifty-four. Drinkwater nothing common did or mean. But, like St John Ervine's Jane Clegg, he made everybody else feel common and mean. This must not be allowed to affect one's judgment of his work and influence on the English theatre. *Abraham Lincoln*, the play by which he will live, was very nearly still-born. It is an old story now, but one which ought to be told whenever the theatre-going public in this country gets on its hind legs, boasts that it recognises the best whenever it sees it, and instances *Abraham Lincoln*. The facts are that for some time the piece played to almost no houses at all. It was taking £8 a performance when William J. Rea, who played the title-rôle, fell ill. Nigel Playfair let it be known through the Press that Drinkwater himself would step into the gap, and that night the house was crammed, the excellence of the play coming through even that performance, for Drinkwater was not a good actor. The result was that the house remained crowded even when Rea resumed his excellent portrait.

There is a passage in Whitman in which the poet describes a meeting with the President: "His look, *though abstracted*, happened to be directed steadily in my eye. He bowed and smiled, but far beneath his smile I noticed the expression I have alluded to." Rea caught this wonderfully well. His

Lincoln had a trick of spiritual withdrawal, of communing in another place, which in the original must have been not a little irritating. After a time Drinkwater acquired something of the same sort. In the end Lincoln's nobility came to be something of a bee in the Drinkwater bonnet. On the other hand, this quality was of immense value to the English theatre, when in the years immediately after the War it stood in desperate need of re-ennobling. Plays like *Mary Stuart*, *Oliver Cromwell*, and *Robert E. Lee* were at that time of extraordinary value.

Mar. 31 From a letter :

Wednesday.

You have used a fine phrase of Hazlitt's—from that fine essay "The Fight"—without using quotation marks. The impression left on the average reader is that you are a much better writer than you really are; the reader familiar with Hazlitt is furious because you take his gems and flaunt them as your own!

My answer :

You have raised the question which has been raised hundreds of times. You cite Montague. Infidel, I have you on the hip. Do you know C.E.M.'s *Dramatic Values*? There you will find him writing: "Mr Robey will come on the stage first as that veteran theme, the middle-aged toper in black, frockcoated, tieless and collarless, leering with imbecile knowingness, Stiggins and Bardolph and Ally Sloper in one, his face all bubukles and wheelks and knobs and flames o' fire."

No quotation marks here! Nor here: "The finely announced entry of Dalila shines like a good deed in a naughty world."

Nor here: "Was this [Ibsen's *Ghosts*] the play that launched a thousand ships of critical fury?"

Nor here: "Does it [Meredith's talk] all seem idle talk to you, froth for froth's sake, or the crackling of thorns under a pot, whereas life is real, life is earnest, and so on?"

In none of these cases does Montague use inverted commas. He just takes it for granted that the reader is

educated enough to know his Shakespeare, Marlowe, Bible, and Longfellow.

The principle is not to use commas in cases where people of education must know that you are quoting. One has to run the risk of wrongly impressing people without education because that is a lesser risk than offending the educated, who will be the bulk of your readers, by unnecessary quotation marks.

I should not, for example, run the risk of insulting a reader's intelligence by putting commas round the statement that though Shaw's habit of standing on his head looks like madness, yet there is method in't. Curiously enough, Montague himself has a passage which exactly marks the dividing line: "It all brings us back to the Aristotelian conception of matter and form, and the unending process of wearing down your matter, making what you leave of it more and more perfectly organic, allowing none of it 'to lie in cold obstruction and to rot,' but filling it all with aptness for some function until—far-off, divine event—nothing inorganic, no *mere matter*, is left."

Here is perfect nicety. *Measure for Measure* is not a very familiar play, but everybody may be presumed to know his Tennyson.

April 2 Sent the Dreyfus play to the Westminster
Friday. Theatre.

April 6 Just back from the Old Vic. Olivier as Henry V.
Tuesday. I annoyed Jock very much by telling him what a relief this or any of the histories, not to mention the tragedies, is after the too frequent revivals of the comedies. I have got to the stage that whenever the curtain goes up on a Shakespeare comedy what I hear is something like this:

As I remember, 'twas upon this fashion.
Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; it wearies me, you say
It wearies you, and there begins my sadness.
In sooth I know not why I am so sad.
If music be the food of love, play on,
And fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
Live registered upon our brazen tombs.

1937]

EGO 3

April 7 A poor day.

Wednesday. (1) Gollancz turns down *Ego 3*.

(2) The Westminster turns down my Dreyfus play.

(3) Insurance company turns down J.A. on medical grounds. I never expected (2) to come off, and (3) was mere impertinence on my part. But (1) is rather worrying. *Ego* sold over four thousand copies, and *Ego 2* round about two thousand. There is no doubt that this figure would have been considerably larger if the Abdication had not knocked the book-trade endways. Gollancz makes the point that books "which are necessarily a repetition in manner if not in matter necessarily show diminishing returns."

April 8 A better day.

Thursday. (a) Sell *Ego 3* to George Harrap, who doesn't beat about the bush ten seconds.

(b) Make a contract with the German authors of the Dreyfus play. As there are two of them and one of me, the shares are to be 60-40. Miss Fassett, of the London Play Company, who is handling all this, is still convinced we shall get a production somewhere, at some time or other. I don't believe it.

(c) Am telling myself that because an insurance company has turned one down is no reason for going about like somebody in a picture by John Collier.

April 9 In the car coming down to my bungalow at Thorpe
Friday. Bay realised I had left my asthma stuff behind.

Stopped at a small chemist's and bought some tablets. Said to Leo, "I just can't bear to run short of Acetylmethyldimethyloxamidphenylhydrazine."

April 10 A sunny day. Spend the morning laying a new
Saturday. carpet in the work-room, which is now completely comfortable. Do not like the look of the waterlogged golf-course, so go shopping. The sight of butcher's meat *en masse* offends me, so I make the fellow bring his joints to the car for inspection. Even so he tenders my change

on a huge, corrugated, gory palm, with the result that I avert my head and bid him go wash the filthy witness from his hand. Choose a shoulder of mutton—spring lamb is still too dear—and a rib of beef, which I refuse to have rolled. Lunch at the Palace, and for some obscure reason one glass of sherry and two bottles of Bass make me so tight that I sleep for two hours in the shelter of Ming vases made of tin and big enough to hold Teddy Brown.

Set off about seven o'clock for Chelmsford, where I meet George Mathew and go with him to Mills's Circus. It is a great feat of organisation to close down one night at ten-thirty and open next day at two-thirty in a town two hundred miles away. This circus is really a city on wheels, and there is a touch of genius in the absence of unnecessary fuss. Mills's two sons are grand lieutenants.

April 14 Went last night to Michal Hambourg's début
Wednesday. at the Grottrian Hall. The Victorian posy I sent her went so miraculously with her dress that she carried it on to the platform. A charming programme of Mozart, Scarlatti, Ravel, and Debussy. The Op. 27, No. 1, Sonata of Beethoven is a little old for a player of seventeen, and Chopin's Fantasia in F minor is a man's piece anyhow. But Michal played Liszt's *La Source*, *Waldesrauschen*, and *Gnomenreigen* studies for what they are meant to be, a rillet, a rustling, and a small convocation, and not in the way of the exhibitionist with his spate, uprooting of oaks, and Wagnerian sabbat. And the Nocturne in B major was lovely. Being her father's daughter, *elle a du poing*. Let's hope not too much. Mark was at the recital on crutches, owing to rheumatism, and in the audience was an old lady who had been at his first recital some fifty years ago, when he was six.

April 15 Two good evenings a mile away from the make-
Thursday. shift drama among which I spend my life. Last night I went to see some all-in wrestling, quite farcical and very funny, the referee being a highly ingenious fellow with a knack of getting a purchase on the ropes and

then letting fly with both feet into the stomach of whichever wrestler he isn't liking at the moment. The audience gets wildly excited and takes it all for genuine. The principal bout was between an American husky and a Dutch Adonis. At the first grapple the husky seized Adonis, whirled him round on his shoulders, flung him to the floor, and stamped hard on his face twice, leaving a piece of indiarubber sole in his eye. This, for some reason, was held to be a foul. The next bout, which was entirely fair and free from buffoonery, evoked no enthusiasm whatever.

To-night I managed to get a returned ticket for the Tommy Farr-Max Baer twelve-rounder at Harringay, which turned out to be a more romantic district than Cicely Courtneidge had led one to suppose. But then all roads leading to a fight are glamorous. The arena was crowded. First a brilliant fight between Patey Sarron and Harry Mizler. In this the American, squat, hairy, and grandly hideous, was all over the handsome English Jew-boy, who was made to look like a beginner, for Sarron is featherweight champion of the world and boxes up to it. Then came the big fight. The betting was three to one on Baer, but proceedings had not gone two rounds before it was obvious he was going to need an 'alibi.' (The *Express* yesterday, commenting on the defeat of Padgham and Critchley in the Addington four-somes, said: "Dental trouble affected Padgham, but there were no alibis.") Everybody except the financiers wanted the Welshman to win. Farr went for his man throughout, like a bull terrier after a mastiff. He scored with his left as he liked, and if he was standing at the end would obviously be the winner. But he never looked like putting Baer down for the count, while four times at least Baer had Farr in trouble, and only the Welshman's quickness in 'coming out of it' prevented Baer's right from landing and doing its work. On the whole it was a victory for character. One saw in the grins of Farr's seconds who had won, and as the referee held up Tommy's arm hats and programmes were thrown into the air, everybody rose to his feet, and the loud-speaker burst into *Land of My Fathers*.

April 18 Last of the season's Sunday concerts at Queen's Sunday. Hall. Took Julian Phillipson, who knows two tunes only—I've Got You Under My Skin and the big theme in the last movement of Sibelius No. 2. Mark came on to the platform with one stick and in his oldest suit, and got a great reception. I hate the people who don't like Mark; if they played bridge with him they would better understand his piano playing. Mark talks before, during, and after every hand, and when he forces himself to silence his mind continues to ferment; this is why he has *fortissimos* and *pianissimos*, but disdains *cantabile*. This afternoon he played Rubinstein's D minor Piano Concerto with admirable truculence in the first and third movements, and a laudable attempt at tenderness in the middle one. I now know that Brahms' Fourth Symphony is permanently too dry for me. I think I can get something out of the first three movements, but confess to finding the Passacaglia a bore. The programme says that the thirty-two variations show Brahms' "complete mastery of the technique of his art." A fat lot I care! Repeating a dull thing thirty-two times doesn't make it less dull.

April 19 Here's something which bears on my view of Monday. Maugham's latest heroine. Turning up my *Manchester Guardian* cutting-book to find something else, I come across this, occurring at the end of a leading article by Montague on Sarah Bernhardt:

Do the great artists themselves live, as a regular thing, in those high places? Scarcely, or Sarah Bernhardt would not have played some of the tricks that she did, nor would so many men of genius have lived somewhat ignoble lives. Perhaps they find in the mental excitement of practising the technicalities of their art a stimulant strong enough to give them a lift, for the time, into that state of passionate insight to which they are then able to haul up even our more sluggish selves; then they flop down, exhausted, and even do something scrubby from mere excess of reaction, just as a soul-stirring preacher might

do if sorely tried when very much tired indeed with the delivery of an excellent sermon.

From this it is evident that Montague accepted "something scrubby"—the equivalent of my "sluttishness"—as a descent and not as the normal status. *Why doesn't Maugham?*

April 21 The Dreyfus play has been returned to the *Wednesday*. grave from which it should never have been dug up. Managers sent it back with compassionate, respectful little notes. Finally I tried the Embassy. Ronald Adam wrote: "I ask you to appreciate that I know very little of the Dreyfus affair." There followed a "hazy impression" of my play beginning, "A collection of unpleasant gentlemen seem to have conspired to do a dirty trick on a man named Dreyfus."

MY AMERICAN VISIT

April 26 The *Sunday Times* has been dangling America *Monday*. before me! *Pourparlers* are now finished, and I leave on the *Bremen* on *Wednesday*. The idea is to write about the New York scene, with the theatre as pivot. I was a little nervous about this until in Borrow's *Celebrated Trials*—my present bed-book—I came across this: "It is no easy thing to tell a story plainly and distinctly by mouth; but to tell one on paper is difficult indeed, so many snares lie in the way. People are afraid to put down what is common on paper; they seek to embellish their narratives, as they think, by philosophic speculations and reflections; they are anxious to shine, and people who are anxious to shine can never tell a plain story." Jumping at the tip, I have decided to treat the whole thing as diary.

April 27 A jolly doctor friend of mine comes with me. As *Tuesday*. B. looks like a Jewish Traddles, I have asked the shipping company whether there will be any

Nazi nonsense on board. The clerk replies that the company does not allow politics to interfere with business. An admirable Jewish maxim! In the middle of some hectic packing—I am convinced that spare collar-studs are not obtainable in America—the 'phone rings. Will I tell a perfect stranger all about the French actress Rachel? I reply that she was Napoleon's last mistress, who lived to a great age, and married Buffalo Bill! (Actually she was born in the year Napoleon died.) An odd thing has happened about the luggage. Having dispatched our cabin trunks, suitcases, and my golf-bag through the ordinary office on Waterloo station, I get home to read that all baggage "*must* be registered at the Norddeutscher Lloyd Office." Panic! Hamlet's "You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom" is not going to be much fun in New York. So I rush hysterically down to Waterloo again and give a perfect performance of Mr Magnus, who was satisfied from the ostler's manner that the leather hat-box was *not* in the Ipswich coach. Am told the luggage will be all right.

April 28 Alan Dent—i.e., Jock—who is to hold the *Wednesday. Sunday Times* fort, makes me a platform offering of his own copy of *Le Voyage de M. Perrichon*. Remembering Madame P.'s "*Vous faites des phrases dans une gare*," I refrain from effusiveness, merely recommending him while I am away to shine, but not out-shine. Wanting to know how good a doctor B. is, I ask him during breakfast if he can do a tracheotomy. He replies, "Yes, if you've a penknife." A Baron Something, whose name I do not catch, but whom I take to be a Director of the N.D.L. Company, is extremely civil to both of us. The Southampton Sewage Works are gay with flower-beds and a bowling-green. Otherwise nothing of note until we go on board, to find the luggage snug in our cabins. I think the N.D.L. should take a tip from the Rules of Golf Committee and alter "*must*" to "*may*."

As we cast off the band strikes up *Eine Seefahrt die ist Lustig*. Lots of telegrams, and a letter from John Gielgud in

his exquisite, absurdly tiny handwriting, telling me all the things I should do and the people I must meet: "The nicest person of all is Lillian Gish." The boat is about half full, with nobody on board I have ever heard of except Max Schmeling, the boxer. The food is excellent beyond belief. For lunch we have the most decorative hors-d'œuvres, including a delicious, velvety herring known as "Swedish Appetiser," langouste, and a German family dish of chopped beef. A good bottle of Eitelsbacher Sonnenberg at 4 marks. Am struck not so much by the extreme attentiveness of the stewards as by their spick-and-spanness, and above all their noiselessness. This is dream waiting. The lazy man need never trouble his pockets; when he wants matches there is always a silent presence to put the box into his hand, like the ghost in the story. A handbox smartness pervades the ship. The lift-boys in their white uniforms suggest tap-dancers in a revue; the stewardesses have the rectitude of hospital nurses.

Leaving Cherbourg, we meet the *Queen Mary* coming in. She left Southampton two hours after us, but is faster by three knots. I ought to be able to calculate when she will catch us up, but even at school could never do this kind of sum. And now I have not the vaguest idea how to employ the time. I have put on an Elia-like quality of superannuation. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with on trim decks. I grow into gentility perceptibly. I am like a dog which, having been on a leash for years, is suddenly liberated and has forgotten how to frisk.

April 29 Thursday. It is just untrue that on the first night out one doesn't dress for dinner. Nearly everybody dressed last night, including Schmeling, elegant as a prize-fighter can be who really wins prize-fights. Handsome is as handsome does is truer in the boxing-ring than anywhere else. George Bishop, who is *persona grata* with everybody at sight, would by this time have made Schmeling promise to attend the Malvern Festival. If I get introduced to him I shan't bore him with questions about Braddock and

Joe Louis. I shall ask him about Salzburg, and tell him as much as I can remember of Ernest Newman's views on Glyndebourne.

Lunch-time. No sign of the *Queen Mary*.

How these Germans eat! A man at the next table breakfasted off grape-fruit, haddock, a dish which the menu described as "Sauté'd chicken liver in claret with mushrooms," and fresh strawberries. At eleven o'clock they bring round soup and rich-looking delicatessen, after which you are supposed to be ready for lunch at twelve-thirty. At two o'clock they begin again with coffee and cakes, tea at four, and the rest of the day is a thick-coming procession of kickshaws, with, at seven o'clock, an eight-course dinner to relieve the monotony.

Just received a radio-telegram from Sam Eckman, the London head of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. "Hope Neptune will be as kind to you as you will be to us." That's just it. I have always found Americans enchanting, while rather boggling at their country. This is probably because it frightens me; I am afraid of its slang, efficiency, bustle, and stark cruelty. No English critic would want to write, and no English editor consent to print, Robert Benchley's notice of a new play in the current number of the *New Yorker*: "There must have been a play called *Bet Your Life* which opened last week, for I have it on my list. However, as I can't find it anywhere in the advertisements and nobody seems to know anything about it now, we might as well let the whole matter drop." Against this my reason suggests that the American hurly-burly may conceal an inferiority complex. But does that help? What about mine? Can there be anything more dangerous to mutual understanding than a clash of inferiority complexes?

And on what, pray, do I base my prejudices? On some Sunday-school Longfellow, sickly Hawthorne, priggish Emerson? A handful of modern novels, some plays, all the Hollywood nonsense? The only American book I have ever really liked is Louisa M. Alcott's *Little Women*. Or am I worried by the lack of great dramatic and singing poets?

Walt Whitman has written sound sense about this. His first point is America's *material* preoccupation, which in any new country must come before the arts.¹ His second point is about Shakespeare and Tennyson. He calls the plays "the very pomp and dazzle of the sunset," while the poetry is "feudalism's lush-ripening culmination and last honey of decay." Just before sailing I threw into my bag W.W.'s *Complete Prose*. "Meanwhile democracy [meaning American democracy] waits the coming of the bards in silence and in twilight—but 'tis the twilight of the dawn." A fine passage which ought to put the English visitor to the States on his guard against uppishness.

April 30 I know now why B. was so eager to get me alone Friday. in the middle of the ocean. He has written a light comedy, which, it appears, has raised laughs in Leeds, and will I read it? How can I refuse? As well might Ravallac, the murderer of Henri Quatre, have refused his limbs to the torture of the boot. I will say this for B's dialogue—that it isn't wooden. The play itself? When I was a young man there was a cake-walk entitled *All Coons Look Alike to Me*. After thirty years of dramatic criticism all light comedies have come to be the same light comedy. Still, this one is not without a certain preposterous sparkle, or seems in mid-Atlantic to be so endowed. There is an excellent bookshop on board, whose earnest attendant is much impressed when I tell him that I know the author of *The Fountain*.

Still no sign of the *Queen Mary*. I believe the officers know where she is but won't say. There is a rumour that we are trying, vulgarly speaking, to do it on her; our best chance is to hope for bad weather, which the *Bremen* likes. At the moment we are just passing a tramp steamer so close

¹ See the poem called "The United States to Old World Critics":

"Here first the duties of to-day, the lessons of the concrete,
Wealth, order, travel, shelter, products, plenty;
As if the building of some varied, vast, perpetual edifice,
Whence to arise inevitable in time, the towering roofs, the lamps,
The solid-planted spires tall shooting to the stars."

that we can almost hear Masefield's "cheap tin trays" hanging in her hold.

May 1 A misty, moisty morning. A thin deck-steward
Saturday. thinks the *Q.M.* passed us in the night; his fat
colleague is of opinion that she is still miles
behind and that we shan't see her before New York. If this
is so I shall be disappointed. I want to know whether, with
neither shore nor shipping to measure her by, she looks im-
pressive or negligible.

Already foresee that I shall be defeated by America's sheer
incalculableness. Here is a paragraph from to-day's issue
of the *Lloyd Post*, published on board, being an item in the
News Service wirelessly from New Brunswick:

Stooping Oak, Tennessee. After keeping silence for fifty-
two days while Jackson Withlow starved himself to the
verge of death, the Lord told the mountaineer Friday
night to take a little wine for your stomach's sake and
suggested orange juice as a chaser.

May 2 A heavy sea running, and I watch my toothbrush
Sunday. veer from port to starboard and back again in
disquieting fashion. I shall not be ill, though I
shall refuse the invitation to visit the engine-room after
breakfast. All such places are hot, greasy, smelly, noisy,
and alarming. And I am glad I did not tackle any of the
buffet at last night's Farewell Ball. It wanted a Rubens to
paint not the cooks but the dishes. The women put on all
their finery, resulting in a flamboyant frumpishness. Why do
Hausfraus, built on Brünnhilde lines, imagine they can wear
pale blue georgette? Henceforth I shall associate the word
'gala' with a dancer more massive than Gilbert's Lady Jane
and wearing a print frock of blue chrysanthemums tied with
vermilion love-knots. Her husband told me in one breath
that he had "two factories and three daughters all like their
mother." I have not spoken to Schmeling.

A word about ship life. Judging by the novels, plays, and
films on the subject, life on a liner should be a maze of
card-sharping, jewel-thieving, expensive vamping, and cheap

flirtation under an obliging moon. The fact lags far behind the fancy. There is only one bridge table, and this is monopolised by a quartet so bellicose that I don't like to cut in. Also they don't appear to play for anything. Instead I teach B. piquet—with the usual beginner's luck he holds all the cards and beats me. I have seen no jewellery worth stealing. There are no unattached ladies, and no flirting couples. Perhaps flirting is not feasible in German. As a conscientious reporter I made one midnight tour of what seemed the likeliest deck, fell over a hose-pipe, and was told by its gruff manipulator to hop it. (The German word escapes me.) The day-time distraction is to walk endlessly round the ship, the alternative being liver, which I prefer. The brass band has vanished into the *Ewigkeit*, to be replaced by a well-meant twitter of strings. These discourse the kind of music which makes me agree with the man who wrote, "Music is an accessory, not an object in life. To make an object of it is sensuality. It is on all fours with worshipping the wallpaper." There is a good cinema, but my friend Sam Eckman knows I can see better, or at least bigger, pictures nearer home. After five days of physical, intellectual, spiritual, and almost moral disintegration I resolve never again to look down on a drunken sailor. I know why he gets drunk. It is to make up for the utter boredom of the sea. As I feel now, I too would give the whole of the Atlantic Ocean for the Waterloo Road at opening time.

May 3 A brilliant morning with a slight haze. The first *Monday*. discernible thing after passing the Ambrose Lightship is the Brooklyn gasometer. This is on the right. Next, on the left, the Statue of Liberty, a big girl who is obviously going to have a baby. The Birth of a Nation, I suppose. Next a factory marked "Wrigley's." Now, very slowly, the famous New York skyline comes through the mist. At first it looks like one of those scenes in stencilled cardboard fashionable in the London theatre just after the War. Here I have the same experience as M. Bergeret's little dog Riquet: "As I approach an object I

grow less." Soon the spectacle becomes overwhelmingly grand: I am now no size at all. Almost every skyscraper has its feather of white smoke; I had expected electricity everywhere. Entering the river, we pass the *Leviathan*, all dirty with nowhere to go—I am told she will never put to sea again. The *Queen Mary* is just being pulled and shoved into dock—she has gained one and a half hours only on the voyage. At noon we too are berthed, and it may be permitted to a landlubber to ask why the docks are at right-angles instead of slant-wise. Through the Customs in something under an hour.

Arrived at a famous but not luxury hotel, my confidence begins to return. A messenger-boy has to wait while I scribble a note, and I ask him one or two questions. No, he does not know what New York looks like from the river. No, he does not know how long it takes to get to Harlem, where he was born. I reflect that at least there is one person in New York who is not my intellectual superior. The hotel has two lifts, one of which is not working. This also makes me feel at home. I have seen three chambermaids, one Irish, one German, and one, I presume, American. They are as old as the witches in *Macbeth*, and not much better-looking. Prices are staggering. This moderate-sized suite, on the sixth floor, consisting of sitting-room, two bedrooms, and two bathrooms, costs sixteen pounds a week without breakfast. Champagne is anything from thirty shillings to two pounds a bottle, proprietary brands of whisky twenty-eight shillings.

After lunch take a stroll down Broadway, which is tawdry, like a film-producer's notion of the Place Clichy, with a hint of Shepherd's Bush. Drive round Central Park, which is a smaller and shabbier Hampstead Heath, with bits of the Serpentine and Rotten Row thrown in. Not a single flower, and the grass brown and patchy. The astonishing thing is still the skyscrapers; the Park is the crater of which they are the walls. From far away and in the near distance they are enormously impressive; when one gets right under them they vanish, and one regains one's normal size.

Dine at the Twenty-one, which I am told is a great place for actors and critics. Discreet lighting, so discreet that you can hardly see the food or read the prices. Ultimately it turns out that a steak which you would get for 4/6 in any London grill-room here costs eight shillings, and a tournedos ten shillings. A bottle of champagne with coffee and a modest cigar brings the bill for two to just under four pounds. Later we stroll along Broadway, which, now that the lights are on, is exciting, like Blackpool at illumination time.

I am afraid all this is extremely tame, especially about money. I have, of course, *carte blanche* from the *S.T.* to spend what I like. But the interesting thing is to see how one would fare if one had saved up a few pounds for a holiday and were using one's own cash. B., whose tastes are simpler than mine, pretends that he will be ruined, but I tell him to look forward to next winter's influenza.

May 4 A sweltering day. *Matinée* of *Victoria Regina* at *Tuesday*. the dignified Broadhurst Theatre. The Americans are an amazing people. Shubert's publicity manager, one Greneker, a delightful fellow, is not only arranging for me to see all his firm's plays, but every other management's as well. Hearing I want to go into Massachusetts to look at a pony, he has sent alternative itineraries by road and rail. I know it's business, but I'm afraid we should let an American critic who came over to London fend for himself. I called on Lee Shubert, whom I had never seen before out of the Savoy grill-room. He too heaped attentions on me. Offered to lend me money!

The theatre was crowded, 95 per cent. women. An enchanting play, and a very clever actress. Lots of people could give the early scenes the Janet Gaynor quality, and extreme old age is never very difficult. The Beaconsfield episode, with the Queen approaching sixty, is another pair of shoes, and Helen Hayes quite took my breath away with her picture of the dragonsome old lady, lidless even when half asleep. An excellent Prince Consort by an actor called Vincent Price. Abraham Sofaer was a good Disraeli; Housman

has left it uncertain to what extent that fluent Eastern courtier had his tongue in his cheek, and Sofaer cleverly left us in the same doubt. Delicious scenery by Rex Whistler, heavily and handsomely realistic, thank heaven! *The Show is On*, at the Winter Garden, with Beatrice Lillie, Bert Lahr, and Reginald Gardiner, is New York's fashionable riot of the moment. About as good as all but the best Cochran. Twenty-three people have had a hand in this. B. Lillie has enormously improved. She has now become a 'socialite' Gracie Fields; New York sees in her what we see in Gracie. Her work in this revue is brilliant throughout; the Atlantic itself couldn't be as unruffled as her Society dame chattering throughout Gielgud's *Hamlet*.

May 5 J. Mason Brown of the *New York Post* took
Wednesday. me to lunch at the Harvard Club. He is
 delightful. But all the better-class Americans
 appear to be this—and from now on I shall leave it to be
 understood. The negro taxi-drivers also have charming man-
 ners. The non-charming people in this country are the in-
 betweeners—the waiters, lift-boys, and particularly box-office
 attendants, who hand people their tickets like bones thrown
 to a dog. This annoys the dog who has paid for the bone.
 With me, who have not paid, the attendants are politeness
 itself. I suppose it is just American independence which
 makes the middle American what we should call rude.

Lunch was prefaced by two enormous cocktails, and accom-
 panied by iced water and coffee. I looked round the vast
 room and couldn't spy a drink anywhere! I begin to per-
 ceive that Americans regard food as something to sober up
 with. "*Ces gens-là ne mangent pas; ils se nourrissent.*" But
 my host's conversation was dry and sparkling. He told me
 about some of my predecessors over here. How St John
 Ervine had achieved a *succès d'animosité*: "But New York
 was sorry when he left; it missed its morning bile." The
 talk ranged all over the place, and I kept reminding myself
 that I had come to America principally to listen. About Mrs
 Patrick Campbell: "She is committing the wittiest form of



Helen Hayes in "Victoria Regina"

hari-kari." About Beatrice Lillie: "Each of her eyebrows is an R.S.V.P." After lunch I was taken over the Century Club—an exquisite period house, with lovely, august furniture. I shall not see anything better over here. Am made a temporary member of the Harvard.

Went to *Babes in Arms* at the Shubert Theatre. This is a fresh, inventive musical comedy played by a sixteen-year-old cast headed by Mitzi Green and Duke McHale. The girl is clever, and the boy is a budding Richard Bird who can sing and dance as well as act. I enjoyed every moment of this; the music by Hart and Rodgers is written in a fascinating idiom which is theirs and nobody's else's. Haunting! The show cost comparatively little to stage—fifty-five thousand dollars only—and could be put on in London for a quarter of that sum. But I doubt whether it would be a profitable experiment. Seeing that it has been put together with many brains, I foresee flattering notices and empty houses. London likes its musical comedy to be solid, substantial, and thick; *Babes in Arms* is airy and fanciful, and the scenery is of the sketchiest. This is as it should be, since the whole notion is that a lot of actors' orphans will be sent to work on the land if they don't make good with a revue of their own concocting. The bill for the kids' scenery is forty-two dollars, which Sam, son of the orphanage master, puts up in return for 49 per cent. of the profits. "Just like the real thing."

I find myself at variance with New York opinion about its good things. (The contemptible is the contemptible all the world over.) For example, Clare Boothe's *The Women* is said by Benchley to be "pretty amusing." I think it is more than that. At least, I was seated between two very fat men on an intensely hot night in the densely packed Ethel Barrymore Theatre, and watched and listened to the intoxicated full of my eyes and ears. The piece is a venomous comedy on an old theme beautifully summed up by this play's cook to the parlourmaid: "The man who can think out an answer to that one about the husband who adores his wife while making love to another woman is going to win that prize

they're always giving out in Sweden." The cast of thirty-five consists entirely of women, each of whom makes you see her man as though she were a Ruth Draper, which very nearly each is. The playing of these American companies is superb, and I doubt very much whether we could match this one individually or collectively. This is nonsense. I am in no doubt at all; we hardly have the actresses, and certainly we haven't the team.

At least, if I were to present this in London I should want Norah Howard, Marda Vanne, Marie Ney, Jean Cadell, Martita Hunt, Olga Lindo, Margaret Rawlings, Isabel Jeans, Greer Garson, and twenty more, including somebody who can suggest a discomfited giraffe. I should also insist on thirty-five American producers, one to each actress to give her the pace! Thirty-five Olive Blakeney's would do fine. What this play won't stand is your English leading lady laboriously making her effects while the rest of the company yawns and looks on. Some of the actresses who did magnificently to-night are Margalo Gillmore, Ilka Chase, Adrienne Marden, and Phyllis Povah, although in fairness I should give the whole cast. These women do not play themselves in; they come on and there is your character, as sharp as if Rebecca West had described her. The scenes include a sitting-room, a hairdresser's, a boudoir, a dress-shop, an exercise parlour, a pantry, a nursing home, an hotel bedroom at Reno, a bathroom, another bedroom, and the ladies' room on the Casino Roof.

May 6 Called on Mrs Patrick Campbell, who is living
Thursday. at a clean little hotel in West 49th Street. Took
 her to lunch at a place she insisted was called
the Vendôme, but which turned out to be Voisin's. Didn't
notice what we ate or drank, and don't remember paying.
Probably very good. After lunch went for a drive across
Washington Bridge. This also I dare say is very nice, but
my attention was entirely taken up by Mrs Pat, who radiated
quicksilver. Saw the *Hindenburg* nosing majestically be-
tween the skyscrapers on its way to Lakehurst, and had the

taxi turn round so as to follow it and get a better view. By the time we had rounded a block it had disappeared, and we couldn't catch it again. This made Mrs P. pretend it had never been there, and that I needed psycho-analysing. I think I have never been in contact with a mind so frivolous and at the same time so big. She talked a great deal about "flight" in acting as being the first quality of a great actor. For four hours I listened to chatter about everything, from Moses to Schnabel. About the former: "He probably said to himself, 'Must stop or I shall be getting silly.' That is why there are only ten commandments." She described Schnabel's playing of Beethoven as being "like the winds of the air and the waves of the sea, without shape." As she said this I heard again the crooning of *Mélisande*.

Of a well-known English novelist: "He has never met a great actress. No actress could be great in his presence. He has a worm in his brain. He lives in hell and likes it." About an American actress: "She has a Siamese forehead and a mouth like a golosh." About another actress: "She is the great lady of the American stage. Her voice is so beautiful that you won't understand a word she says." About the same actress: "She's such a nice woman. If you knew her you'd even admire her acting." With a smile, about *Ego*: "I did so enjoy your book. Everything that everybody writes in it is so good." About Washington Bridge: "The world's greatest piece of architecture after *Hedda Gabler*." About *Hedda*: "You have always been right. I never could play her because I could never get the Latin out of my blood. I have had Swedish masseuses who were ten times better *Heddass*." About herself: "Many people say I have an ugly mind. That isn't true. I say ugly things, which is different." And again: "My voice at least has not gone, and Brenda can always make me another face." About her future: "I don't think I want to return to London. They seem quite satisfied with Miss B." The whole of this was punctuated with stories of her white Pekinese, Moonbeam, and melodious altercations with the taxi-driver, who failed to convince her that a certain monument was not Grant's

Tomb. About Sarah Bernhardt she said: "I toured with her for five months, sat on her bed till five o'clock in the morning, and never heard her say a word to which a child could not have listened." She told me how she dined with Sarah three nights before she died. Sarah was wearing a dress of pink Venetian velvet with long sleeves, sent for the occasion by Sacha Guitry. Knowing that she had not long to live, she sat there with a white face eating nothing and infinitely gracious. Her son Maurice was at the table, paralysed, and fed by his wife. At the end of the meal Sarah was carried upstairs in her chair; turning the bend of the staircase, she kissed one finger and held it out. Both knew they would not meet again.

When I got back to the hotel I found I was holding a velvet geranium which, in one of the altercations with the taxi-driver, had become detached from Mrs Pat's headgear. We had chattered and chunnered for four hours.

May 7 I had just written the foregoing when a terrific *Friday*. thunderstorm broke. Great crashes and a lot of lightning, which made me fear for the skyscrapers. These were said to be in no danger. I suppose it is that, the sides being sheer, the stuff shins down them without opposition. In spite of the torrents, it was unbearably hot, so I took off my clothes and lay on the bed.

At twenty to eight I went downstairs, and the middle-aged, motherly receptionist said, with a telephone to her ear, "Sakes alive, Mr Agate, my daughter has just called me to say she's heard on the radio that there's been an explosion in the *Hindenburg* with everybody killed."

Within a minute people were saying "Sabotage." Somebody in the lounge who appeared to know about these things said that normally the ship would have avoided the storm and delayed making her moorings, but that she couldn't afford to do this as she had to return to England last night with a full complement of passengers for the Coronation, and to pick up films. The special editions of the newspapers struck me as being slow in coming out, but the electric news-

signs got busy at once and Times Square was almost impassable. I was intending to see Katherine Cornell, and there meet B., who had spent the afternoon with his brother. As it was Cornell I particularly wanted to see, and *Candida* has nothing important till the last act, I delayed going, and listened to the radio's version of the disaster. I noticed that the announcers were very careful to qualify each and every statement, and to say that this was the nearest that could be guessed. A grim touch of realism was given by the command to all owners of motor-cars proceeding to Lakhurst to turn back and leave the road clear for doctors and ambulances. There was also a stern order to sightseers to keep away. New York is deeply moved by the tragedy, and nobody can understand why hydrogen was used. It is thought that if not lightning, then some electric friction in the air—supposing there is such a thing—was the cause. If it wasn't, then the disaster happening at the same time as the storm is an extravagant coincidence. I had forgotten how short a play *Candida* is, with the result that I got there in time to see the curtain descend upon a beautiful apparition bowing more lavishly than ever Bernhardt acted.

Called for Maurice Evans after his show. He has made tremendously good here, the view being that if he is not the best English-speaking actor he will have to do till the next comes along. He told me that Mrs Pat said after his first night, "I liked it all except the honey-coloured hair," and then, turning to an immaculate blonde, "I always think fair hair destroys personality, don't you?" Wound up the evening at the Cotton Club. This is the place to hear swing music as the negroes like it. What I personally think about it doesn't matter; it stirs American audiences to frenzy. Duke Ellington conducts, presuming conducting is the word. A first-class cabaret follows. This takes place in a purplish penumbra, in which the dancers, naked except for diamond girdle and breastplate, are a twilit salmon-pink. They are extraordinarily attractive. The principal star is one Ethel Waters, and her enthusiastic reception argues talent. The Nicholas Brothers are here, tinier and skinnier and cheekier

than ever. The waiters share the general frenzy; the very plates, as they are put before you, shimmy. Our waiter is a magnificent fellow with blue-black hair; the chap at the next table is pure ivory. A delightful little lady, like a drawing in sepia, persuades me to buy two toy dogs on the plea that they come from Manchester, though whether the English or the American Manchester she doesn't say. We regale ourselves with broiled lamb chops, chickened rice, and sausages with scrambled eggs. I drink half a bottle of champagne, the other two insist on whisky—and the bill comes to five pounds. All that was yesterday!

Lunched to-day in the Persian Room at the Plaza Hotel on Fifth Avenue, an opulent place like our own Ritz Hotel, except that the women are not so well dressed. As we come out I am struck by the dazzling whiteness of the street, some greenery, and a woman suckling a child. Over the way are four skyscrapers of great beauty. Each has its own shape, and B. points out how the eye, when it has done climbing, is rewarded, since each has a top which is designed to be something more than a roof. In comparison the London to be seen through our hotel doorways is a collection of native huts at the Wembley Exhibition. I have now entirely altered my view of this city, and warn everybody that Broadway is as much representative of New York as the Elephant and Castle is representative of London.

In the evening to Madison Square Garden to watch Tony Canzoneri fail to win back the lightweight title from Lou Ambers, to whom he lost it last year. As usual in these world championships, there was too much at stake for the men to go out for larks. A rather dull affair, the Italian losing on points after taking a lot of punishment. Canzoneri, who has a real name like an old master—Luigi d'Ambrosio—was originally a shoe-shine boy who in 1928 started to take the shine out of all the other lightweights. For ten years he has been recognised as one of the great masters of the glove. Now at twenty-seven he is old, and they tell me that the spring is gone from his legs, the snap from his blows, the resiliency from his body, the alertness from his

mind. The previous bout, between one Paul Junior of Maine and one Al Casimiri of Corona, was very nearly the best fight I have ever seen. Sheer spectacular hitting, Junior winning by dint of a series of right uppercuts like Woolley's off-drive. The building is enormous, all concrete and steel, fire-proof and air-conditioned. What I didn't like were the refreshment vendors who continually moved about between the seats, interrupted the view, and were a nuisance generally. There must have been some hundreds of them.

Supper at the Howdy Club in Greenwich Village. According to Rian James, author of the informative and amusing *Dining in New York*, the Village is a lotus-land in which "gaiety is synthetic, poverty is fashionable and real, hilarity is forced, honour is infrequent, purpose is pie-eyed, ambition is asleep, and art is merely an excuse for everything." The Howdy Club is a night resort so dark and crowded that everybody eats off everybody else's plate. The entertainment is clever, witty, and wholly impermissible.

May 8 Motor to New Marlboro partly to see New Eng-
Saturday. land, partly to visit the famous Hackney pony
stud of Mr and Mrs J. Macy Willets. Take
about three hours each way. Admirable highway, in one
place skirting a lake-reservoir reasonably like Thirlmere.
The scenery consists principally of gay Swiss chalets and
sordid little golf-courses poorly kept. The odd thing about
the chalets is that they are obviously put up on the Wem-
mick principle: "Here's a bit of ground. Let's build some-
thing." There are neither walls nor fences, which gives the
landscape the air of being unfinished yet derelict. The wash-
ing-up, the car-tinkering, the tea-taking, all are conducted
in full view of the passer-by. "Come right in" is the mode
of invitation in this country, and every house seems to be
saying it. This applies also to the great State Insane
Asylum, which is within fifty yards of the road, unfenced
and unwallled, so that you can see the inmates standing at
the windows and clutching the bars. B., who has been
clinical assistant in an asylum, says that they are only

standing, and that ninety per cent. of the inmates are perfectly happy and in no need of pity. Later the skyline offers a big school, bare, bleak, and penitential-looking. Manners vary. At one place an old man who tells us the way doffs his bonnet with a sweep of courtesy that is almost Shakespearian; at another a youth makes his thumb do the talking. This isn't the "dumb insolence" it looks like. Americans refuse to be rattled, and what looks like casualness is really equanimity.

Willets is a distinguished-looking man, very like poor Norman O'Neill with some of the same silvery charn. His lady is one of the managing sort, I guess a Candida, but with more style than Shaw's. In two minutes I realise that she knows all about ponies, and this puts me on my mettle. They pull out the pick of the stud for me, famous little stallions whose names I have known for years. The brood mares are out in the paddocks, and it is a thrill to renew acquaintance with old favourites like Bricket Fuchsia and Colne Marvel which I knew in their young days in the English show-ring. Here too is the little mare Eastertide, one of the greatest winners in America as at home. She is being got ready to show and retains all her old brilliance. Am very much taken with a wee pony called Cassilis Sonnet, by Cassilis Monarch out of Bricket Fuchsia by Fusee. Perfect to look at, and might develop into a performer. Four years old.

Get back about seven o'clock, and agree to take pot-luck at any restaurant B. likes the look of. The place he chooses is clean, the service amiable, and the food revolting. *Dead End* at the Belasco Theatre is a Galsworthian essay on the tendency of the law to turn youthful wrongdoers into hardened criminals. Very moving. Principals in the cast mostly children.

May 9 Am writing this on the verandah of a builder's
Sunday. hut on the slope of a hill overlooking the Croton
Lakes, some forty miles from New York. The
Grenekers have motored us here. Mrs G. is a provocative little
creature and hair's-breadth image of the Bergner. Heavenly

day. Apple-blossom and the décor of Viennese operette with Lea Seidl in the wings preparing to warble. There are five workmen, Italians from Trieste, though they prefer to call themselves Austrians. All are of an incredible *Gemütlichkeit*; the one named Rudi is the perfect Joe Gargery. The hillside belongs to Greneker, who has already built three houses on it, and is busy on a fourth. Or rather it is Mrs G. who is busy; she is architect, builder, engineer, plumber, decorator, and foreman of works. The land is terraced as in Provence, and one of the feats of this extraordinary little lady, as practical as she is fascinating, has been to make a road 800 feet long, 16 feet wide, and in places 20 feet deep, without any engineering training whatever. She builds, without plans, large airy rooms of sweet-smelling pine. I do a lot of scrambling, holding on by the scaffold-poles, and wonder what it is in the New York air that enables me to sit up till all hours of the night in an atmosphere which in London would make a horse dizzy, but here merely clears the brain.

Lunch in the open air consists of salami, raw Italian ham and cheese, followed by chicken soup, chicken and spinach, iced beer, coffee, and *creme-de-menthe frappé*. This was the workmen's meal, cooked by them and smelling so good that we jumped at the invitation to share it. Where it all comes from even the Grenekers don't know, as this is a wilderness apparently without hotels, restaurants, or shops. We are an extraordinarily gay little party, and I feel I am nearer to American life than I have yet got. Mrs G., who as the day wears on becomes more and more like the Bergner, has the same child-like *mutinerie* masking colossal intelligence. She has invented finger-stalls with brushes at the end of them. These are for the use of painters, enabling them to work on their canvases with five or, I suppose, ten fingers at once. She combats the suggestion that this is painting *à la* Lewis Carroll by the statement that the method is psychologically and functionally more correct. I refrain from retorting that I shall look forward to listening to a painting by Mark Hambourg.

After lunch B. goes in the car to advise in the purchase

of timber, and I am left on the verandah with the diary, a friendly spaniel, the apple-blossom, and the workmen's wireless celebrating Mothers' Day. A quarter of a mile below me the cars pass and re-pass on the ribbon of road. Presently on the hill across the lake a fire breaks out, and there is the momentary excitement of a cream fire-engine dashing across the grey steel bridge. Then the afternoon settles down, and I am left alone with the apple-blossom and the musical-comedy décor. As I have now had a sufficiency of American mothers, I turn off the wireless and go to sleep.

May 10 Wall Street. Utter peace. The holy place is quiet *Monday.* as a nun. Breathless with, I suppose, adoration of the almighty dollar. Anyhow nobody seems to be worrying. A few people are chatting quietly on the kerb, the rest are lazing along. No messengers butt into me at breakneck speed. A leisurely calm pervades the scene, and I am conducted unemotionally into the pile-carpeted, onyx-chandeliered, rosewood-furnished withdrawing-rooms of Messrs Brown, Brothers, Harriman and Co., foreign correspondents of my bank. One feels that in this country Mr Micawber's manners, which so peculiarly qualified him for the banking business, would here have found their scope and outlet. To my amazement the young gentleman who 'takes care of' me has never heard the phrase 'ten grand,' which every English chit knows is the sum you are held up for in these parts. However, I get what money I want, and return to a street that is ambling to lunch. The American bustle is all ballyhoo carefully fostered for consumption abroad. I have seen Greneker conduct two telephone conversations, dictate to a secretary, talk to me, and indulge in a nap all at the same time.

My meal is taken at a famous hotel. The lamb chop has the consistency of indiarubber. Nothing in America tastes of anything.

Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow,

occurs in, I think, *Yarrow Unvisited*. Let me revisit Yarrow,

or even Barrow, and partake of home-bred beeves! Iced water to drink, or so it is proposed till J.A. puts in his little oar. Nobody else drinks anything, and it is explained to me that no American can take a drink during business hours for fear of being over-reached.

The other guests are Cedric Hardwicke, the English actor, and Winston Paul, the first man in America to make ice by electricity and therefore a millionaire. Our host is Eddie Dowling, lessee of the St James's Theatre and Maurice Evans's partner. Cedric has the idea of a floating deck half-way between New York and London on which to stage plays striking a compromise between their conscienceless professionalism and our own aspiring amateurism. According to Cedric the English are playwrights who cannot finish off plays, like trainers who can do everything with a horse except make it win, whereas the Americans are up to every dodge of putting plays together without being able to write them. The ice man is typical, I imagine, of all American millionaires; that is to say, his clothes make you wonder how often he can afford to lunch at sumptuous places like this. Hearing that I may be going to Philadelphia, he says he regrets he hasn't a place there, but will telegraph this afternoon, putting at my disposal a friend's apartment, car, and chauffeur. If, on the other hand, I have a mind to visit Idaho, he will be delighted to offer me the same facilities plus a ranch in the Rockies to which from time to time he runs down. A warning to me not despise strange Americans, for I do not hear about the ice and the millions till later! Our host, Eddie, was originally a music-hall artist who toured England some years ago, without, as he himself admits, achieving any particular fame. His wife is Ray Dooley, who was at one time a partner in vaudeville with W. C. Fields—music-hall is music-hall all the world over. Eddie, who called me Jimmie at sight, is an infectious little man who looks like a member of the Lupino family. He takes to you, you take to him, and you are bosom friends before you sit down. He told me some astonishing things about Maurice Evans's success over here. How a total stranger to

Maurice, having seen him in *Romeo and Juliet* and *St Helena*, wrote to him asking if he had another play and wanted money for it. If so, would he meet him in a bar? Maurice, having nothing better to do, turned up, and the man said, "I'm sorry, but since I wrote you I've engaged my capital elsewhere. Would twenty-five thousand dollars be any use, and what's the play?" Maurice stammered out "Shakespeare's *Richard II.*" But the man did not blench, and, calling for pen and ink, wrote out a cheque then and there. Maurice then went round to most of the other managers and brokers, and in each case was politely bowed off the premises. At last he fell in with Dowling, who first enacted an amusing little comedy in which he pretended to be his own secretary, and so played Jorkins to his own Spenlow. Before the interview was over the pretence was abandoned, and another twenty-five thousand dollars was forthcoming. When the time came to pay back the first twenty-five thousand dollars, the original philanthropist was asked what share of the profits to date he thought he ought to have. He replied that he hadn't been out for profit and would be satisfied with six per cent. interest! The result is that our young actor is now a rich man. Maurice modestly told me as much himself, and added that he had a permanent offer from Hollywood at a thousand pounds a week, which he intended to go on turning down. Coming back from lunch, I was driven past the Waldorf-Astoria. This is a stone building as impressive as a Sibelius symphony, and I have a notion to try the cooking there.

At five o'clock George Jean Nathan called to take me out for cocktails. As I do not want to drink too much—for what little drink there is in America is immensely potent—I order tea and crumpets, and get some very poor tea and very mean crumpets. The place is expensive, and I note one or two little ladies who look exactly like white toy poms. They are accompanied, and obviously of the highest respectability, though only Peter Arno could do justice to their utter inability to open their mouths, and, when they do, to produce anything resembling human speech. Amazing children.

Nathan has not changed. He has still the same delicate features and beautiful hands, the look of the fallen cherub, and the smile which breaks out when you say something malicious and he thinks of something to cap it. After a bit we are joined by Richard Watts, the dramatic critic of the *Herald-Tribune*, and I listen while they tell me about the greatness of Maurice Evans, who, I am rather shocked to find, is over here rated above Gielgud. From what these boys say I judge that Maurice must have made enormous strides, for if we are to talk about greatness I begin, as always, with first things, and must therefore contrast Maurice's baby-face with the august masks of Irving, Forbes-Robertson, Benson. A great actor must include the forbidding in his facial range: when last I saw Maurice he could do no better in this line than stave off with impudence.

Excursion, by Victor Wolfson, at the Vanderbilt Theatre, is a fantasy about a Coney Island steamer that put out to sea with all its passengers on board and found an island. When I woke up the steamer with its passengers was coming back. A mixture of *Outward Bound* and *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*. We could act this and probably will.

May 11 Lunch with the Drama League. The Leaguers *Tuesday*. contrive to be overdressed and dowdy. Hardly a man to be seen, and none who dares to be heard. I sit between Peggy Wood, of *Bitter Sweet* fame, and the little lady who is Richard II's Queen. Peggy tells me that she is to play Portia again "in order to have a finger in the Shakespeare racket." Her view about Nathan is that it is not playing the game to make so much money out of a thing you despise, that thing being the theatre. Richard's Queen is the most appealing, sensitive little lady I have met in this continent. She has a Plantagenet coiffure and wears a frock of red silk on which the figure '88' is printed some hundred and fifty times. I ask what this means. Richard's Queen says she hasn't noticed it.

The object of the lunch is to present the medal for the year's best acting performance won in previous years by

Katherine Cornell and Helen Hayes. This time it goes to Maurice, who turns up an hour and a quarter late! Among the celebrities present are Mrs Richard Mansfield, who, it appears, gives readings from Shakespeare with her late husband's annotations, and Ruth St Denis, formerly a great dancer and now an exquisite figure with white hair and the first approach I have seen to anything one can call a manner. There is a lot of introducing from the chair, and each person as she is named stands up and bobs. I am introduced as the Dean of English Criticism! In the course of the speech-making we are told that Gielgud during the last week of *Hamlet* took eighteen thousand dollars and that Evans's run of *Richard II* up to date averages eighteen thousand. I am twitted with these figures, and asked what London can show against them. I speak for a good ten minutes, in the sort of cathedral hush which befits a dean, the difficulty of praising Evans to his face being got over by the fact that the face is no longer there, its owner having grabbed his prize and gone. In the matter of the figures I tell the League with a well-simulated air of conviction that if America will send us two Shakespearean actors as good as Gielgud and Evans we will . . . I don't need to finish the sentence. An American audience though dull-looking is quick-witted.

The rest of the afternoon is devoted to the censorship question, which has suddenly become acute, and in this way. The authorities, being disturbed by the prevalence of the strip-tease act, recently closed down all the burlesque theatres, and, having done this, were seized with doubts about the legality of this proceeding. Accordingly something called the Dunnigan Bill has been rushed through both Houses, and now only awaits Governor Lehman's signature to become law. What the promoters of the Bill appear not to have realised is that giving a censor power over burlesque theatres makes him tsar of all other theatres. Here is what the *Tribune* says on the matter :

The Bill would leave every serious production in New York under threat of instant decapitation if Mr Moss, or

any machine politician who might later succeed him, or any pressure group which could get the ear of a licence commissioner or exploit the exigencies of any passing electoral campaign, should happen to feel that the production was 'immoral' or 'impure.' A single line or word or gesture could serve as the pretext for such an edict; while no real right to review is allowed, since the Bill prohibits a stay on appeal. The burlesque houses may have been indecent (if so, the courts were and are open for their suppression), but this bill carries the question far beyond the matter of the burlesque houses. It makes it a question of preserving the integrity of the New York stage.

As one of the speakers at the luncheon to-day put it, "this Bill would degrade the New York stage to the level of the English." In every New York theatre to-night leaflets were distributed inviting the playgoer to petition Governor Lehman not to give his sanction to the Bill. B. signed one, but I refused, holding that as an Englishman I have no standing in the matter. I realise that B., with the wider culture of the Jews, has no sense of this limitation. It is important to recognise that the movement against the proposed censorship does not come from the burlesque houses. It has originated with and is backed by the most responsible and respectable theatrical elements. These include the Actors' Equity, the League of New York Theatres, the American Federation of Musicians, the Stage-hands' Theatrical Protective Union, the Drama Critics' Circle, and the Dramatists' Guild. But the question is not so simple as it sounds. Much was said at the luncheon about the political use of the censorship. Here it is important to note the difference between the English and American connotation of the word 'political.' Over here the word has a sinister implication totally unknown to us. There was not the slightest objection to the strip-tease acts until the burlesque theatres brought them into Broadway and began to draw audiences away from the legitimate theatres and cinemas. Whereupon the vested interests began to have qualms on the score of decency. In England the objections to a censor are based on the potential asininity of whoever holds the office.

In America it is feared that wealthy managements may attempt to get less powerful organisations censored out of existence. This and nothing else is the kernel of the battle.

Called on Helen Hayes and found her to be a very bright, extremely intelligent little woman full of an inner distinction which looks out through a woebegone pair of grey eyes set wide apart from the nose. We were not there very long, as Helen wanted to listen to Alexander Woollcott on the radio reading Edward VIII's abdication speech. She disapproved of Woollcott doing this eve-of-Coronation stunt, but intended to listen all the same.

May 12 Coronation Day. Cable from my sister May :
Wednesday. "London is empty without you!" Claud

Greneker rang up before breakfast to ask what I had thought of the proceedings, which here started at 5 A.M. It appears that Mrs Greneker is also a wireless expert and had connected up the whole show. G. sounded very weary, and I refrained from asking the poor man whether he had got up to listen or had been kept up.

Dined last night at Voisin's. Now that Mrs Patrick Campbell was not with me and I could give some attention to the food, I found I had discovered a restaurant which is the equal of anything in Paris. The service was both attentive and understanding, and the habitués looked as though they were accustomed to food. Attended première of *Orchids Preferred* at the Imperial Theatre. As my views of musical comedy are known, I shall reproduce what Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times* says :

For the antiquarians it might be reported that the story, in its graceful and airy summer fashion, deals with the adventures of some amiable girl prostitutes. There is, of course, an ingénue who really doesn't know what her friends are up to and is much shocked when the hero, thinking she is no better than her companions, makes love to her. . . . Tastefulness is not one of the outstanding qualities of *Orchids Preferred*, but it isn't the vulgarity that is likely to bother you. It is the excessive tediousness of the proceedings that will probably send you screaming

into the streets, or, preferably, into *Babes in Arms*, which is playing near by and will help you forget some of the horrors of this little spring catastrophe.

I have spent the whole morning writing, and this being Coronation Day propose to do no more work. Seeing New York is not all beer and skittles. I would rather say that it is very little beer and very fatiguing skittles. I am therefore going to take the afternoon off prior to attending the Coronation Ball to-night.

May 13 Listened to the King's speech immediately after Thursday. lunch yesterday. It came through perfectly.

Good-bye, alas, to my afternoon off! A. proposed, but B. disposed. He insisted on my going to the film at the Belmont Theatre, *The King's People*. This is a chronicle affair made up by Drinkwater with Shaw's help out of a lot of newsreels. The papers here are rather hard on Shaw:

The world's greatest playwright, it seems, is also the world's greatest ham. Though he photographs poorly—something like a badly neglected faun—Mr Shaw knows how to deliver lines as well as write them, and the dialogue, in which he claims that Ireland created the new British Commonwealth of Nations by stubbornly refusing to take any part in the old discredited empire, is theatrically successful, though the paradoxes do seem a little tired. Incidentally, the only reference in the film to Edward VIII is couched in the vaguest and most politic terms. "Circumstances," the commentator remarks, "circumstances which are now part of British history, led to his abdication from the throne." The word seems a dull, pedantic and unpardonably British way of spelling L-O-V-E.

Took our Coronation dinner at the Ritz-Carlton. Quite good. One of the many head waiters agreed that Americans have no palate, or have successfully destroyed it with cigarettes and cocktails.

The Ball was a grand affair, or, at least, that was the intention. Personally I cannot reconcile opera-hats with

burberrys, which is what I saw many men wearing. The women's frocks suggested a tennis dance at Upper Norwood, and it could be maintained that American women do not dress but merely clothe themselves. All the same it was a gay affair, with a well-meant pageant. This was a procession of nations with a tail of British and British-American societies, and I suppose one ought not to smile at bespectacled matrons carrying banners. But it was all a little funny. The Seventh Regiment Armoury is much bigger than the Albert Hall, and the way to the refreshment-room was through a huge canvas of Westminster Abbey! Some of the girls were lovely in spite of the pains their dressmakers had taken to hide the fact; in so far as my observation goes the smart American woman simply does not exist. Perhaps there are smarter places than I have yet discovered. Next week I propose to tackle the Colony Club, which is so expensive that revue comedians make jokes about it. After all, before you can pluck your hot-house flower you must first catch your hot-house.

May 14 *You Can't Take It With You*, a farcical comedy by *Friday*. Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman at the Booth Theatre, is the smash hit of the season and this year's winner of the Pulitzer Prize. It is an American jumble of *After October*, *French without Tears*, and *George and Margaret*, and it is very funny. They call it "a madhouse which has all the comforts of home," and perhaps a home with the discomforts of a madhouse would amount to pretty much the same thing. The home is that of Martin Vanderhof, retired from business, full to the brim with the philosophy of contentment, bubbling over with its humorous, pawky expression. The story? This, if I surmise correctly, is about Martin's daughter, who works in a store and has fallen in love with the boss's son. The boy invites his parents to dinner at the girl's home, but they mistake the date and arrive at a place which they can only conclude to be the equivalent of our Bedlam. For all the inmates are border-line cases. The girl's mother has the overpowering

silliness of Dickens's Flora without her vitality; she is a crushed strawberry who insists on wearing heliotrope. There is a son who writes anarchist tracts not because he has any sympathy with anarchy, but because he likes to see the stuff in print. There is a gauche young woman who affects ballet-dancing. There is a Russian exile whose friend is a Grand Duchess earning her living as a waitress. (Kaufman is a first-rate hand at taking the good where others have already found it.) There is an Aged P. who is partial to inventions that go off making a noise like bombs. There is a woman who lies on a sofa in a state of intoxication. There is a comic negro servant. There are a few people I cannot account for. And I must believe that it is all extremely funny, though a foreigner cannot tell what will amuse another race. "I wouldn't deceive you for all the rice in China," says the boy. "Is there much rice in China?" asks the girl. This is good Noel Coward, and to my surprise nobody laughed. But they laughed at a Russian refugee: "You do not know what following is. In Russia *everybody* is followed. I was followed right out of Russia." And "The reason Mother writes plays is that eight years ago a typewriter was delivered here by mistake!" went with a roar. But American audiences laugh very little, and are quite undemonstrative. The young woman in front of me may have been full of inward merriment. Her hat—a straw sloop with a bowsprit of holly and a rudder of tulle—showed no tremor.

May 15 Oscar Wilde called the Atlantic Ocean "disappointing." Out-of-season Atlantic City, whither we have come for the week-end, is complete and summary disillusion. Blackpool without its crowds. The station called Pennsylvania is a most impressive place—immense, lofty as a cathedral, finely proportioned, noble, marble-flagged, clean, and very nearly noiseless. The trains start from a hole underground. Ours is an abominable train, hot, stuffy, with windows both impossible and unlawful to open. There is an almost continuous whistle from the engine, a brain-splitting shriek, which is one of the tortures

left out of Octave Mirbeau's *Le Jardin des Supplices*. Three hours of flat, deadly dull countryside like Essex without its trimness.

On the way down I read Maxwell Anderson's *High Tor*. I must be careful about this one, to which even the *New Yorker* is respectful. It is a poetic fantasy. The place is the top of a mountain, the time the present, the weather Macbeth's, the *dramatis personæ* mostly dead, the medium blank verse, and the plot a jumble of Barrie's *Dear Brutus* and *Peter Pan* and Susan Glaspell's *The Verge*, except that Anderson's characters have toppled over. I doubt very much whether it is quite my cup of tea.

Atlantic City turns out to be completely empty, swept, garnished, and not a mouse stirring. Not a soul on the nine miles of boardwalk, which is the name for the promenade made out of planks like a pier. Nine miles of hotels, casinos, fun-palaces, and the like. No roadway. The hotels give directly on to the boardwalk, or would do so if the doors were not locked. Windows locked also. To-day is scorching hot, and all the radiators are turned on full. Our hotel is a splurge of orange, pink, and black, the food exactly as everywhere else. They try so hard, go through the most touching preliminaries, give you Gargantuan helpings, rush up trimmings and sauces with the urgency of reinforcements, and the result is something that tastes like the inside of a sofa cushion—the steak I had for luncheon was obviously a bit of padded armchair. Pathetic! But B. doesn't seem to mind; he stokes up at each meal like a famished walrus.

The Horse Show, which is in full swing here, is excellent, and on the same scale as Olympia. I was very anxious to see the famous five-gaited horses, which have even better and longer fronts than the English thoroughbred. The long, flowing tails are miracles of science and adjustment, like huge interrogation marks. In classes for five-gaited horses the required gaits are walk, trot, canter, what is known as 'slow gait,' and the rack. In these last two gaits the horse has the same way of going, which is not exactly pacing (where both legs on each side move simultaneously), but

combines a trot with the forelegs and a pace with the rear legs. This movement they do slowly and at speed, the first being the slow gait—the second the rack. Both methods of progression are uglier than anything devised by the animal for itself. The big harness horses are poor, the ponies superb, the champion being Highland Cora, by King of the Plain out of my little mare Skirbeck Cora. The jumping is very much better than ours, and the prize-money bigger. At home we are content with a fifteen-pound first prize and a challenge cup to be held for one year. Here the class prizes are the same, but there are championship classes for horses and ponies where the prizes are \$400, \$200, \$160, \$100, \$80, and \$60. The same applies to the hunter classes, in which the women ride magnificently.

I was wheeled to the show to-night in a thing called a rolling chair. This contraption plies for hire along the boardwalk and is the only mode of conveyance. It is a combination of bath-chair, sedan-chair, and rickshaw, is propelled from behind by a negro, and may be used either open or closed. The cost is \$1 per hour or any portion thereof. As I was wheeled solemnly along there was not a soul in sight in as much as could be seen of the nine miles of boardwalk. Yet the auditorium was full of immensely smart and obviously wealthy people. The men were wearing silk hats, tails, and buttonholes; the women struck me as orchid-and-husband-conscious. I have sensed all along that their rule is iron, and that every American woman has two souls to call her own, the other being her husband's. The young men, all looking exactly like Robert Taylor, abase themselves before innumerable Loretta Youngs; I conclude that the much-vaunted American independence obtains outside the home only. Five minutes after the show closed everybody had disappeared, the boardwalk again became empty, and the world was left to me and darkness in the person of my chairman. Or would have been but for the neon lights illuminating the regardless ocean. (Excuse the Andersonese!) The place is terrifically expensive. For a haircut and shave the hotel barber demanded a dollar and a half, which with

the tip came to seven shillings. I do not think Americans pay these prices.

May 16 A lovely day of glorious sun, cool wind, and a *Sunday*. sparkling blue sea which does not seem to go either in or out. White sands peopled with donkey-boys, only the donkeys are horses and the boys full-grown negroes of great stature. It is odd how few boys and girls I have seen; the children here seem to be born round the age of sixteen. I left Atlantic City with regret. During the night it had become crowded with a light-hearted, orderly, and considerate mob. I bought a blue china horse, some hand and a half high. They told me at the shop that it was an exact model of the American agricultural horse. I don't believe this, but it is a delicious blue. Just as I am leaving, Macy Willets accepts my offer for Sonnet, and the pony is to be shipped to Birmingham at once.

The return journey was much more comfortable, the train being cool and extremely clean. I saw a notice saying that last year these Pullmans carried 1,475,000 passengers 1,500,000,000 miles without fatal accident. Lunch was simple and good. By the way, the railways ignore daylight saving; you just make the train one hour after its scheduled time. These trains go through the middle of the streets of towns and villages like motor-cars; if they stopped, you could shop from the windows, provided you could open them. All the streets are at right-angles to the line, and the smallest places have the air of being planned. But the country still retains its unfinished look. I note one house and a tennis lawn which have apparently dropped from the skies into the middle of nowhere. Here, in the middle of untenanted plains, is a baseball ground with a game in progress. Suddenly a lake, with a tiny motor-yacht as fresh as paint, and a huge, burned-out barge high and dry on the shore. Nothing much else to be seen, so I settle down to read the Sunday papers. To-day's *New York Times* weighs two ounces short of two pounds. It has 14 sections—New York news, general news, finance and business, editorials includ-

ing letters and special articles, sport, society, book reviews, magazines, the news in pictures, drama and music, science (which includes aviation and motoring), real estate, classified advertisements, and pictures of the Coronation in roto-gravure. 220 pages in all. Eight narrow columns to a page each containing some 800 words. The pictures and the classified advertisements take up 26 pages, leaving 194 pages. Cut this in half to allow for the unclassified advertisements, and the result is roughly 100 pages of 8 columns. This means 640,000 words per issue, or somewhere about the length of seven average-sized novels. The price is 10 cents, or roughly 5d. The *New York Herald-Tribune* weighs 1 lb. 10 oz., and is made up in similar fashion, but with a comic section in colour. Any attempt to read these papers as a whole must fail because it would take more than a week; you choose the section you want.

May 18 Seeing is believing. I have heard of tree-*Tuesday*. squatters, but never believed in them until this morning, when I saw Shipwreck Kelly, "The World's Champion Flagpole Sitter," perched high above a music-hall and now in the fourth day of a squat which is to run thirteen days, thirteen nights, thirteen hours, and thirteen minutes!

Lunch at a French open-air café, where a green hedge, half a dozen shrubs in tubs, and the accent of the waiters transport one into the Pyrenees. After lunch explore Radio City. It is a world in itself. Magnanimity's purest poetry, reducing it to the prose of the fact is a sorry business, though a little of it must be attempted. The underground part of it covers four blocks. The ground floor is Burlington Arcade in excelsis. I concentrate on the music-hall section; the entertainment here is a combination of stage and screen. First I am amazed at the foyer, easily ten times the size of the Empire's. The dominant decorative note is Ezra Winter's 60 x 30-foot mural: "Based on an Oregon Indian legend, this Shows the Upward March of Man toward the Golden Mountain where the Author of Life dwells beside

the Fountain of Eternal Youth." (The prose is American.) The two twenty-nine-foot chandeliers weigh two tons each. I am indebted for this and a mass of other information to the page-boy detailed to show us round, who looks as though he had come out of a Richard Strauss opera. All the ushers are men in livery, and there is a complete absence of the cow-girls, Quakeresses, little Miss Muffetts, who enliven our cinemas at home. We are taken through banqueting halls, kitchens, and into the Celebrity Room, where we sign the visitors' book. Presently we attain the Balcony, so high that looking down into the foyer is a giddy business. A panel slides back discreetly and we find ourselves in Radio City Music-hall, which is exactly like the interior of an air-ship hangar. What light there is filters through hundreds of slats. There are six thousand two hundred seats. The screen measures seventy feet by forty. The drop-curtain weighs three tons. A news-budget is in progress with the house in darkness. This over, the lights go up and we become aware of a symphony orchestra; I reflect that here is the concert hall of which Berlioz dreamt. The orchestra plays an overture with Beechamesque punctilio, while changes of lighting bathe the audience in a glow of tender dawn warming to wanton sunset. The band returns hydraulically to the place whence it came, having done great execution. A lady clad entirely in diamonds now goes through the motions of the haute école with the assistance of a dazzlingly white horse. This concluded, we arrive at the Rockettes. There are thirty-six of them. They are as good as the Tiller Girls. Then comes the new Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers picture *Shall We Dance?* which imbecility I refrain from seeing. We emerge, having looked on something which is potentially the greatest show on earth. One says potentially, because a show needs an audience, and there do not seem to be more than a couple of hundred people present. But the place is so vast that these two hundred may actually be two thousand. If you can't see an orchestra of seventy players you can hardly expect to estimate the number of human dots scattered about the floors of this measureless cavern.

Dine with Nathan at the Colony, said to be New York's last word in cooking, but the first I have heard about this art. We eat Canapé Colony, which is crab meat on pastry with a bisque sauce, cold soup, a filet mignon Henri-Quatre, and a chocolate ice. To drink there is Zeltinger 1931 and half a bottle of champagne, the brand of which I cannot see through the napkin. This place is firmly confident of itself, and the crowd too; both are justified. Not as guest but as an observer of social conditions I ask the cost, and Nathan is forced to show me a bill of just over eight pounds.

Tobacco Road at the Forrest Theatre. This drama of Georgia's back of beyond is utterly and entirely American, and I am warned that I shall not make much of it. All the actors speak in undertones; it takes me half an hour to hear, and another half-hour to understand what I hear. The nearest thing is the plays of Synge, except that there is no poetry, actual or implied; the humanity is as remote as the statues on Easter Island. Jeeter Lester is the owner of what was once a tobacco farm and now grows so little cotton that he and his family are starving. He is married to a wife of whom he says, "When she was young she was that ugly it didn't make sense." The play is a maze of frustration, incest, and decay. We are shown some home-made nuptials between a semi-idiot and a revivalist female who has become possessed of an automobile; the boy will not hear of a honeymoon because he wants to joy-ride! James Barton plays Jeeter rather in the manner of Joe Jackson, the English music-hall comedian in trouble with a bicycle. The audience rocks with laughter throughout, taking no notice of the grandmother who hobbles through the play without saying a word; she is the counterpart to Firs in Tchekhov's *Cherry Orchard*. This extraordinary mixture of grim, sordid drama and riotous fooling has been running for four years.

Supper with Maurice Evans at Sardi's, the equivalent of Rules, after which we are escorted to Harlem. Except in the matter of complexions, Harlem looks exactly like Pimlico. We drink beer and eat mutton bones drenched with pepper in a resort called Moon-Glow. This is a dingy little cubby-

hole crowded with darkies carrying on like a scene in a Cochran revue staged by Professor Stern. The waiters handle their platters after the manner of Salome. The heat is terrific, and the noise so great that I cannot hear a single word of a saucy song composed in my honour and bawled into my ear by a dusky gigolo. For some time B. has been trying to say something to me. But there's no opportunity of hearing what it is until about three o'clock, when he seizes a moment of comparative silence to yell: "You don't appear to be getting much golf." At four o'clock some idiotic drink restrictions come into play, and we make a move.

Lunched at a chop-house. Very comfortable and cheap. I appear to have lunched twice to-day! This is not so, but due to writing and living a diary simultaneously. To-day's entry up to now was all about yesterday; with this lunch I catch up. In New York it is almost impossible to keep events from telescoping. This is due to the *slow* American hustle. I once had a horse that ran away at a walk. Here the hustle takes the form of not letting you alone; a continual, relentless buttonholing goes on all the time. B. has his hands full, less in making contacts we want than in avoiding those we don't want. It doesn't seem to occur to anybody that one may like occasionally to be left alone for five minutes, if only to think over what one has seen.

Went in blazing sunshine to the top of the Empire State Building and hated it. There is a glass cage in which I felt fairly safe, but anywhere near the parapet was impossible. Something sways, but whether it is you or the building is as moot a point as I know. The visibility to-day was charted at 25 miles, and for the first time I realised how small the island is and why the skyscrapers came into being. The view includes the Manhattan skyline seen from behind, the Statue of Liberty, the encircling Hudson with its scores of fussy little tugs, the *Normandie*, which has just arrived and looks, as the fellow in *Lear* says, "diminished to her cock," the great bridges, Central Park, the rule-made avenues and streets, rival monsters like the Chrysler Building and Radio City, and hundreds of lesser pinnacles in stone like marzi-

pan. Perhaps Man is not so inferior to the ants after all. I am, of course, not surprised to find that none of the Americans I meet up here is a New-Yorker; no Londoner ever climbs the Monument. The people I talk to on the roof answer me in French, German, Swedish, Italian, Russian, and broad Lancashire.

Once more on terra firma we went to the pictures and saw the Coronation and *Hindenburg* films. The shots of Queen Mary made a great impression, the people near me crying out, "Isn't she lovely?" But the whole film was received with the greatest enthusiasm. The *Hindenburg* picture included some of the evidence of Captain Rosedahl, the head of aviation at Lakehurst, who said that it was well known that airships generate electricity. This is discharged as soon as the landing-ropes touch earth, and members of the crew handling them before establishing contact have been known to suffer severe shocks. All this electricity runs wild in the immediate proximity of seven million cubic feet of extremely inflammable hydrogen! The Germans say they can't afford to buy helium, which can only be got from America, though here I am given another explanation. This is that German airships are not designed for helium. If they change their design they will be unfitted for hydrogen, which is the gas they must use in the event of war since they would not be able to get the other from America.

Dinner at the Grenekers' apartment, twenty-three stories high and overlooking Central Park. Down below there is a constant stream of motors, and four games of baseball are in progress in a space the size of the Oval, but grassless. I had asked to be given a typically American meal, as this is probably the only private house in New York in which I shall eat. The menu consisted of cream of mushroom soup, duck, asparagus, fresh rice, and for dessert a grape salad with hot cheese rolls. As a concession to British taste a bottle of Beaune.

The play to-night was *Yes, my Darling Daughter*. It is being played to packed houses, all of which endorse the maternal sanction to a young girl to behave as she likes.

May 19 Opening of the Renoir Exhibition at the
 Wednesday. Metropolitan Museum of Art. A large, well-
 dressed crowd possessing a distinction I have
 not met anywhere else. This magnificent collection of over
 sixty pictures has been got together through the courtesy
 of several other galleries and some twenty private owners,
 including Helen Hayes and Edward G. Robinson, the film
 actor. Here is the glorious *Déjeuner des Canotiers*, an amaz-
 ing piece of sheer paint. About this Harry B. Wehle writes :
 "None of the girls or young men present is smiling, none is
 definitely flirting. A striped awning shields them from the
 sun, and they sit there over the remains of their luncheon,
 some of them chatting, one playing with a lap dog, others
 doing nothing whatever. Gentle breezes from the river seem
 to caress them—and they are completely happy. The picture
 is a hymn to youth and summer-time."

Here too is *By the Seashore*, a picture of a lady sitting in
 a basket-chair with a background of cliffs. But the loveliest
 canvas of all is *Le Bal à Bougival*, painted in 1888. A pen
 drawing for this picture is inscribed, "Elle valsait délicieuse-
 ment abandonnée entre les bras d'un blond aux allures de
 canotier." I came back to this picture half a dozen times.
 The grave innocence of the girl, the eyes wide apart like a
 kitten's, the swirl of the white dress, the red of the hat, the
 blue of her partner's rough suit, the animation of the scene
 which is yet not without melancholy—all this makes up a
 composition brilliant yet tender, like Sarah's playing in the
 first act of *La Dame aux Camélias*. Even when I got out-
 side I went back to have one more look at a picture owned
 by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and which is going to
 be one of my best excuses for returning to America next
 year.

The foyer of the Astor Hotel is as full of people coming
 and going as is Charing Cross Railway Station. We lunched
 with Milton Shubert, and I was asked a lot of questions
 about the English stage. I began to answer these with the
 freedom imparted by two thousand miles, when I saw B.
 making frantic signals for me to shut up. Nothing escapes

him, whereas I in my simplicity had not recognised an interviewer. The room in which the meal happened was a combination of box-office, bookstall, flower-shop, and motor sales-room. The appearance of food was a surprise. *Matinée of Richard II.* A packed house and great enthusiasm for Maurice. I still have the impression that his features are too boyish for the conveyance of tragedy, though this view would be very unpopular here, and I do not give expression to it.

In the evening *High Tor* at the Martin Beck Theatre. Defeat with heavy slaughter, and even B. routed. The difficulty is to see this play through American eyes, which I suppose one ought to do. As an Englishman I am now certain that it is high fudge interlarded with bleak, totally unfunny humour. But I am alive to the danger of regarding this as criticism. That a Japanese might not be tickled by the fun in *Juno and the Paycock* would be no criticism of Sean O'Casey's play. The fact that B. and I sat glum while the audience roared its head off tells me that I am no closer to an American than a Japanese is to an Irishman. Renoir once said, "After all, if you are going in for oil-painting you may as well use oil-paint." If a poet is going to write a fantasy he may as well be fantastic. I don't boggle about the fantasy part of this play—high-faluting is the same all the world over. It is the comic interludes which strike me as inexpressibly dreary. I can only suppose that they awake echoes in the American mind which escape me, though I can find no hint of them in the text. The production has *Theatre Arts Monthly* written all over it, and the play would probably do very well in London if cut in two and produced in two theatres—the guff at the Mercury and the larks at the Gate. Nothing in either text or production could prevent one from recognising a potentially very fine actor in Burgess Meredith. This young man has an immense amount of vigour and a tremendous honesty, and I guess that he represents pretty exactly what young America is thinking. He has a fine voice, an excellent presence, and an open countenance conveying a backwoods

likeableness. I should very much like to see him in something other than the backwoods idiom, something to be spoken instead of snarled. But I am in no doubt about his acting powers.

Here is raised a question of vital interest in the American Theatre—how to keep its young actors. Meredith's success means that next year he will be entirely absorbed by Hollywood. As this process will be repeated in the case of every promising young player, the result can only be the complete dearth of grown-up players. The theatres are very much worried about this.

May 20 New York declares against the proposed dramatic censorship. Here is Governor Lehman's decision :

While fully appreciative of the high purpose of those supporting this bill and while warmly joining in the desire to maintain the theatre on a proper moral plane, it nevertheless seems to me that the specific provisions of this bill are too broad and too susceptible of abuse in administration.

Was given luncheon to-day by the critics. These were Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times*, John Mason Brown of the *New York Post*, Burns Mantle of the *News*, Joseph Wood Krutch of the *Nation*, John Anderson of the *New York Journal*, and George Jean Nathan, who writes for all the other papers. Very jolly. They want to know who are the heads of the English stage, meaning the present-day Irving and Ellen Terry. I reply John Gielgud and Edith Evans, with a reservation in favour of Laurence Olivier as the most promising young actor. It appears that I am right about *High Tor*, which nevertheless was awarded the Drama Critics' Prize by a majority, Nathan voting against it; right about Burgess Meredith; wrong about Maurice Evans. But I gather that, generally speaking, first principles are the same here as in London. Atkinson is austere and Morguesque, Mason Brown is the New York Darlington, and Burns Mantle reminds me very much of Baughan. Krutch

is the Ivor Brown, I cannot quite fit in Anderson, and Nathan is his mischievous self. Mason Brown says, "Nathan is a good game, but you've got to know the rules." Was told a lot of lovely stories, the best being the remark of the French lady at the six-day bicycle race: "Ah nuts, alors!"

Worked all afternoon, then taken for cocktails to the Fort Belvedere in West 55th Street, a newly opened bar lavishly decorated with frescoes of the Duke of Windsor, who if he wanted could be crowned King of America to-morrow, the Prince of Wales's feathers, and an escort of Life Guards. The wits congregate here. I asked one of them what he most wanted to see in England. He said, "Oxford." And the second thing? "Lady Oxford." Dined in logical sequence at the Queen Mary in East 58th Street. This is laid out shipwise with an illuminated model of the boat. Swedish hors-d'œuvres are spread on a refectory table and you help yourself. One plateful is a meal. B. had two platefuls, and but for my innate decency would have attempted a third. Decide to have an evening of real drama instead of make-believe. Arrange therefore to be taken to a night court in West 54th Street, where we have seats in the front row. The performance starts at 8.30; the décor is that of any English police-court. The players are almost as inaudible as English actors. Police, burly as all-in wrestlers, shepherd their prisoners with a kind of rough gentleness. The magistrate, who wears neither wig nor gown, is thirty-five, keen-faced, looks *fortiter in modo* and turns out to be *suaviter in re*. The offences have all been committed since five o'clock this afternoon. Men and youths accused of peddling without a licence. They carry their wares with them. One batch is eleven strong, all Italians. They are discharged with a caution. Street-betting cases, a string of fourteen vagrants, old, some of them with heads which look definitely imbecile, all indescribably filthy. Might be the inmates of one of Gogol's doss-houses. Pitiful. All are discharged. Most of these cases have taken less than a minute; the longest five minutes.

An old Jew, who should be a figure in Italian comedy, pleads that he was not begging but selling umbrellas. These, produced, are obviously unsaleable. Old Jew says they are saleable if it rains hard enough. Acquitted. A young man with the air of a shabby Narcissus pleads not guilty to a charge we cannot hear. A whispered colloquy between judge and prisoner, at the end of which the young man is told to go away and behave himself. There are no more prisoners at the moment, and an interval is taken. It is a Gilbertian court which waits for crime to be committed!

The shriek of a police-van as in the films. A young man has beaten up his wife for spending his wages on silk stockings. The magistrate tells the young man he is exceeding his authority. Will he promise no more beatings? Yes, if there is no more buying of stockings. A bargain is struck. Another young man is accused of violently assaulting his neighbour's wife! Will he desist? No, he will assault her again the moment he is out of this jam. She is a bitch, and has brought it on herself. The magistrate keeps him in cells till the morning, for his own protection. The neighbour seems wholly disinterested. The next is a drunk. "You're soused," says the magistrate. "I'm not sure you're not canned. Cells till morning." A voluble Japanese has refused to pay a taxi-driver \$1.75. He has no money, but if he can go home on the subway he will return with the cash before the court rises. "But since you have no money how are you going to get the fare for the subway?" The Jap points to the taxi-driver: "He will lend it me!" The court dissolves in laughter, and the pair leave amicably. Another wait, then more peddlers, more vagrants, more drunks. It is twelve o'clock, and we go to supper. B. in his capacity as medical adviser sends me home soon after two. He insists on my having an early night, himself being all for another spot of Harlem's Moon-Glow.

May 21 B. is a fellow-traveller of genius. His latest notion
Friday. is that while I am working he should look at the things which it would be disgraceful to leave New

York without one of us having seen. This is splendid of him. Came in this morning to report that Shipwreck Kelly was still sitting on his pole; when he saw him he was eating the luncheon he had presumably taken out of the basket on which he sits.

Have come down to Coney Island in lovely weather, first calling for money in Wall Street, which to-day is distinctly livelier. Our chauffeur, who is second cousin to Kid Lewis, points out J. P. Morgan's home and library, the Law Courts, and Tombs Prison. The view from Manhattan Bridge is superb. To the left it might be the Thames. To the right is Brooklyn Bridge, beyond which we glimpse the Statue of Liberty. Behind us is still the Manhattan skyline, which keeps all its glamour. We proceed through slums, then suburbs which might be Tufnell Park. Then a long stretch of shady avenue, very like Bournemouth. Coney Island is like Southend Kursaal, only on a bigger scale. The season has not yet begun, and very few of the fun-fairs are functioning, though we manage to catch a glimpse of a Creature with a Human Head and the Legs of a Horse, and a Woman whose Body is Turning into Stone. We are introduced to Jack Johnson. Lunch at the Half Moon Hotel, on a balcony overlooking the boardwalk, narrow sands, and a lazy sea. Nobody about. The hotel is vast, clean, and comfortable. On the walls is an exhibition of graphic prints and easel paintings, all very modern and I think good. I should like to buy Isabel Bate's *Push Carts—Bronx*, which I think Tommy Earp would approve. But I am told that nothing is for sale, the exhibits being the property of that part of the Government known as Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project. As B. is sunbathing and I am alone in the restaurant with 78 empty tables, this is a convenient opportunity to say something about the most important thing I have struck during my visit. Far and away the most important.

In January 1984 Maxwell Bodenheim, a poet from Greenwich Village, picketed Relief Headquarters with a board proclaiming, "Artists can starve as well as bricklayers." W.P.A., which stands for Works Progress Administration,

promptly put Bodenheim in gaol, and three weeks later created the first Writers' Project. This means giving writers work at minimum rates in place of a dole. This was quickly followed by the Easel Project, for the benefit of artists. Next, with the establishment of the Federal Theatre, came the turn of the players and the studio employees generally. At the beginning this was run on more or less military lines by an ex-Army officer, Colonel Earle Boothe, who was in charge during the War of the Argonne Players in France.

In August 1935 the playwright Elmer Rice had the notion of making the undertaking æsthetic as well as benevolent. He enlisted the sympathies of Mrs Hallie Flanagan, organiser of the Experimental Theatre at Vassar. This lady 'pours tea at the White House,' which is American slang for moving in the best society. So encouraged, the Government proceeded to pour out money, \$6,000,000 being forthcoming between October 1935 and June 1936, which rate of subsidy still maintains. To-day the Federal Theatre has 200 active companies employing some 15,000 people. They perform anything and everything, from Shakespeare to Eliot, and have recently produced with great success *Murder in the Cathedral*, Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, and the negro *Macbeth*. No living author receives more than \$50.00 a week, while the actors get \$28.00. The highest price of admission is 55 cents, and at least one-third of the audience is composed of people who have never seen a play before. The theatre plays to an audience of 15,000,000 people all over the United States, giving free performances in parks, hospitals, and schools. It has a research laboratory. This addition to the culture of the country during the last eighteen months has cost less than half the initial cost of a battleship. Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times* tells me that it costs \$50.00 a month to put a man on the dole, and that with all the overhead charges, rent, costume- and scene-designing, lighting, and management, and transportation by truck, the Federal Theatre costs \$110.00 per man per month. Whence he rightly argues that for the extra \$60.00

a month something of extraordinary social value has been accomplished. The Broadway theatres take but little interest in the movement. One or two managers of tumble-down rented theatres "where the balcony rubs knees with the stalls" have profited by making lets. An unbiased opinion seems to be that whereas the Federal Theatre has time and money it lacks discipline. Actors returning to Broadway after a season at the Federal Theatre are said to need re-llicking into shape.

Now consider the Government and music. Here are a few facts: Music-teachers are giving free instruction every week to half a million persons in 260 project units. W.P.A. units have performed 4915 works written by 1481 musicians living in this country. About 2500 folk-tunes have been collected and transcribed by workers in a dozen regions. Three hundred and forty-nine copyists, arrangers, and librarians assigned to twenty-four projects in eighteen states are at work in libraries, universities, and project offices, and have turned out several hundred thousand music manuscripts and folios, which are to be made available as nuclei for public lending libraries. On April 1 of this year 18,810 men and women were on the Federal Music Project's rolls and were employed in 763 units, including 155 concert orchestras, 80 bands, 91 dance bands, 24 theatre and novelty orchestras, and 260 teaching projects, choral groups, opera units, chamber ensembles, and in other kinds of units. In New York City since the inauguration of the Project's programme 7,689,406 lessons have been given to children and adults unable to afford private instruction.

May 22 Last night, directly we got back from Coney
Saturday. Island, we went to a concert given by the
W.P.A. Federal Music Project at the Federal
Music Theatre, West 54th Street. We saw an elegant theatre half full of a wholly attentive audience with its gaze fixed upon a stage bare as one thought only Russian stages can be bare. The band of thirty contained two women, one of whom was the leader. I thought it played about as well as

the best English amateurs. Price of seats, 55, 35, and 25 cents. The programme was the following :

Fugal Concerto for Flute, Oboe, and	
String Orchestra, Opus 40, No. 2	... Gustav Holst
Serenade, Opus 7	... .. Richard Strauss
Concerto Grosso for Strings and Piano	Albert Stoessel
Concerto in A minor for 'Cello and	
Orchestra, Opus 33, No. 1	... .. Saint-Saëns
Symphony No. 26, in E flat major	... Mozart

The programme is annotated in the handsomest fashion. The note on the Strauss Serenade is strengthened by a quotation from our own Ernest Newman, though the annotator has wit enough of his own. Of the Holst piece he tells that "the little Concerto trots peacefully away until, suddenly getting up and scratching itself, it disappears in a trill for the two wind instruments and a rising pizzicato scale in an absurd rhythm."

From the concert we rushed to the Federal Theatre. It is difficult to understand, let alone explain, *Power*, by Arthur Arent, presented at the Ritz Theatre. Quite simply it is an attempt to stage the front page of a newspaper. *Power* is a plea for state ownership of the manufacture and supply of electricity. In form it is a revue, containing two acts and twenty scenes. The dialogue is bleaker than a Blue book, consisting almost entirely of statistics culled from private and governmental balance-sheets. Here is one scene. "Connecticut," a voice sings out. At once two actors come down centre as in the last scene of a pantomime, line up, and chant, "Private ownership twenty cents," "Government ownership five cents." Per unit per hour, or something of the sort. This is repeated twenty times with different states and different rates, till the stage is full. The background consists of changing film-shots of the power plant. There is music and dancing, and the whole thing exceeds in violence any tub-thumping the English know. It is propaganda sheer and unalloyed. It is malevolent, witty, sinister, laughable, destructive, and constructive all at the same time. The ushers are in Russian costume, and there is just a hint

of OGPU behind it all. But it is intensely vital, and I know nothing in England to match it. The house is crowded nightly by young people bursting with social consciousness. B. and I, who are totally indifferent to the price of electric light in New York or anywhere else, sit entranced. The acting is far and away the best we have seen in this country, and I am convinced that this movement is the most significant thing we have struck over here. In art, music, and drama it has shown itself tinglingly alive. Indeed, I cannot understand why the New York critics have said so little about it, since it is easily the highest cultural force in America, actual and potential, and they left us to stumble on it by accident. Perhaps it wasn't quite accident. We were looking for something of the sort and found it.

May 28 Newspapers give you no rest. Yesterday morning *Sunday*. I was dead beat, having for three weeks led a life which in London I could not have endured three days. At nine-thirty the 'phone rings. It is John Mason Brown. Am I up? No. Will I get up at once, please, as he is coming round with a car to take me for a morning spin. I got up, to find a blazing, sweltering day. We set out, the skyscrapers in the shimmering heat taking on the aspect of old lace.

In the car I tackle J.M.B. about the Federal Theatre to learn the opinion, which I understand to be unanimous, of the New York critics about it. He tells me the following:

- (1) The Federal Theatre is potentially the greatest thing that has ever happened to the American drama.

BUT

- (2) It has encouraged bad acting by giving bad actors parts instead of forcing them to leave the profession and start something for which they are better fitted.
- (3) It has produced too many bad plays badly.
- (4) It has toured the country offering bad theatre to audiences accustomed to good movies.
- (5) It is too insistently Left, thus putting the Government in the position of paying money to destroy itself.

- (6) It has insufficiently realised that it is now or never, and that if the Federal Theatre fails to justify itself it means good-bye to subsidised art, music, and drama in this country for generations.

I pluck up my courage and tell J.M.B. that I think he and his brethren are failing to see the wood for the trees. What other than faulty production does he expect to find in an immense undertaking started yesterday? The whole affair is less than three and a half years old. What, in Great Britain, should we expect if we started 200 municipal theatres in Surbiton, Penzance, Kettering, Cromer, Widnes, Hereford, Doncaster, Darlington, Leatherhead, Peebles, Perth, Carnoustie, Ecclefechan, Llandudno, Aberdovey, Cowes, Windsor, Whitechapel? Two hundred producers wanted, at a minute's notice, to be conjured up out of nowhere! I quote Dr Johnson and the performing dogs. To me the thing is a breathtaking wonder, and I must leave it at that.

First J.M.B. shows me the Cathedral of St John the Divine. Originally there was enough money for no more than the chancel. This was built in the Byzantine mode, and for a time the Cathedral remained unfinished, medieval-fashion. Then more money came along, and an immense Gothic nave was added. Now they are making the Byzantine chancel Gothic. Next the Riverside Church, the gift of John D. Rockefeller. And then, inevitably, Grant's Tomb. This is less imposing than it might be because a man is sitting on it, cleaning it. But the purple lighting is always going to be horrid. Outside I bag a collector's piece of infelicity. This is the notice:

GENTLEMEN ARE REQUESTED
TO REMOVE THEIR HATS
WHEN ENTERING THE TOMB

What would Elia have made of this?

Lunch at Le Coq Rouge in East 56th Street between Madison and Park Avenues. A very smart place, full of pretty women beautifully dressed. In the taxi I snatch a wink

of sleep. We are off to a ball game. Yankee versus St Louis Browns. The Yankees win by 14 points to 2. I am told that Gehrig, who fields at first base, makes 40,000 dollars a year. I think it is a lot for what he does. The others get from 12,000 dollars a year down to as little as 4000 dollars. And travelling expenses. The game is highly complicated, but I grasp the essence of it in a quarter of an hour. Am told one odd tradition. This is that at the beginning of the home team's seventh innings every spectator gets up and stretches himself. I watch, and it happens. The crowd, some 16,000 strong, looks lost in the enormous stadium which to-morrow, Sunday, will be packed. To-day only the 'bleachers' are full. These are the seats in the sun, where you sit and get your brains bleached.

May 24 Spent yesterday exploring New Jersey. The place
Monday. is as unfinished as everywhere else, and impresses me as being unfinishable. Like Slough, only less tidy. The Pulaski Bridge is a miracle of engineering. Two miles of steel switchbacks over stinking swamps, which still stink. The driving here is five times more expert than ours; it is quicker and safer. I have done a fair amount of motor-ing and have not seen a single case of dangerous cutting-in. By comparison English drivers are bank-holiday lunatics. They have huge notices: "This is a highway, not a speed-way." Lunched off hot dogs and iced beer served by white-coated attendants at a bar by the roadside, and very nearly on the road itself, the radio in the car—it was a taxi, and most taxis have radios—discoursing Bach, Beethoven, Scriabin, and Stravinsky. Coming back I notice a Drive-in Theatre: "Sit in the car and see and hear the pictures." In the evening dropped into Radio City Music-hall again, and saw a short film about John D. Rockefeller, whose death had been announced in the morning.

To-day has been almost my busiest, and I begin to feel that there is a saturation point even in being entertained. Got caught in a traffic jam this morning. Swelteringly hot; and sitting in cab with braces off. Train passing on railroad

overhead. Five yards to the left road-drills are hollowing out a subway. (At night the drills stop, and miners wearing steel helmets explode dynamite charges.) In other cabs also jammed two radios are tuned in to two different stations. So as not to be left out of it the horn in the car behind us jams. And I am trying to think out what sort of presents A, B, and C expect me to bring back. Have just bought my sister May a white leather bag which I feel convinced will turn out to be leatherette.

Lunched at an open-air café which looked extremely chic. It was in fact so chic that the waiter, having brought the menu, disappeared for twenty-five minutes. As I had only half an hour for lunch, this put me in an atrocious temper, in which I refused to write three articles on the American Woman.

Dined with Lucius Beebe at the Twenty-one. Lucius is a luscious Beckfordian figure. He is said to be fabulously wealthy, write a daily column for fun, and change his clothes seven times a day. Proud of being called the American Bayard, "sans peur mais avec beaucoup de reproche." Dog-French, but it conveys what I mean. Afterwards to *Room Service*, the new farce at the Cort Theatre. This is a riot, and New York theatre-world talks of nothing else. The credit is all given to George Abbott, who has produced this, though the authors, John Murray and Allen Boretz, deserve some of it. Abbott is part-author of *Three Men on a Horse* and the producer of *Boy meets Girl*. *Room Service* is funnier than both these put together. It is the American counterpart of our Aldwych farces. The pace at which it is taken is terrific, and even your Broadwayite can hardly keep up with the jokes, which are peller and meller than in any farce I remember. The plot? All about a theatrical company which is stranded in a hotel and cannot pay its bill unless the play is a success. The hotel manager is about to throw everybody out neck and crop, but this is countered by the manager of the theatre company, who knows his hotel law. A person who is sick cannot be turned out of a hotel, wherefore the author of the play must be sick. The hotel manager

is informed that it is a case of tapeworm. "The tapeworm must register," he says with authority. (Yes, taste over here is not our English taste.) Earlier on the author had appeared in a preposterous dress-suit, whereupon the lowest comedian said, "I wore a dress-suit like that in a juggling act." But that joke got no laugh except from me, who felt painfully English throughout the entire farce. Over here they are more graphic. "Feel like I've swallowed a couple of holes" means that you're hungry. The gag which got most laughs was: "I'm like Hercules. I think I've finished cleaning up, and there it is again!" In the third act the fun got furious and fiercer. The pseudo-invalid had pretended to die from drinking too much disinfectant. But a dead man is no longer sick, and the body could therefore be taken out of the hotel. This had to be delayed at all costs, the curtain having gone up on the piece, which was showing signs of being a wow. Whereby prayers had to be said, and orations made, and a hymn sung with one eye on the clock and the other on the corpse, who upset all arrangements by getting up and going to the lavatory. By this time, however, there was no doubt about the piece. As it was being played in the theatre belonging to the hotel, the curtain descended on the hotel manager's triumphant "Perhaps this will be the first hotel to win the Pulitzer!" But even in the thick of the fooling one or two quiet strokes of wit had gone home. There was one about a new form of theatre: "A play without actors, a theatre without audience, only scenery and critics."

Went on to supper at El Morocco, a place so swagger that literally all you do is to sup. Eating appears to be out of the question. Like the woman who dresses with extreme simplicity, the place is ruinously expensive. It seems that the proprietor some years ago discovered that his guests, if of the right sort, would provide better entertainment for each other than he could provide for them. Therefore there is nothing whatever in the restaurant except a floor and a band. As the crowd increases the floor-space decreases, and on really witty nights the dancers are squeezed out

altogether. The décor changes from time to time, which is to say that while it remains Moorish the shrubs in the pots are changed. One thing is changeless, and that is the zebra-striped upholstery. This is so well known that in the illustrated papers the name of the place is never mentioned; everybody who sees the stripes recognises El Morocco. As Beebe put it, "In the season everybody has to come here or they think you're dead. Or out of town, which is worse." Coming out, I heard a cad expostulating with the management. He didn't see why he should pay fourteen dollars for a coupla drinks for himself and the wife. I thought the man was clearly mad. Drinks or no drinks, fourteen dollars is surely not excessive for sitting in a room in which Noel Coward once waved to Beatrice Lillie!

May 25 Had a look round Philadelphia, which I like very
Tuesday. much. Imagine Birmingham encircled with a ring of Streatham-like suburbs and set down in the middle of Surrey. The surrounding country is enchanting, and perhaps the reason I find it enchanting is that it is more nearly English. Here the houses have walls, palings, and neatly trimmed hedges, though I apologise to Streatham in the matter of the suburbs. The houses in the immediate vicinity of the town are of an appalling and uniform hideousness. All of them appear to have been built out of a child's box of bricks, each one having its pair of inane little pillars supporting nothing. Lunched at the Bellevue-Stratford, a palatial hotel and far bigger than anything in London. When I got to Philadelphia I found that the Devon Horse Show was happening only twenty miles away, so I took the afternoon off and discovered a toy Richmond, one of the judges being Bernard Mills, the son of Bertram Mills. Over here the stud-grooms are called managers, and one of them turned out to be Willie Black, who was with me when I bought Skirbeck Cora. America is large, but the horse-world is small.

In the evening sampled the Dance Theatre, which is W.P.A.'s essay in ballet. Frankly, I do not think W.P.A. is

essaying very well. I am not a judge of this art, and the fact that I am in another country is not going to alter my determination not to write critically about it. The programme was in two parts. First a dance drama entitled *How Long, Brethren?* This is made up from six or seven "Negro Songs of Protest." The second part was a dance interpretation of Voltaire's *Candide*. One understands why niggers should have no shoes. But why *Candide* and Dr Pangloss and the rest of the Voltaireans should wear period costume all but the feet, and then insist on baring these, is, as Americans say, 'just one of those things.' B., who is a balletomane, tells me that while the applause was up to Sadler's Wells standard the dancing fell a long way below it. I think it only fair to the New York critics to make their point again here. This is that the revue called *Power* is easily the best thing W.P.A. have done in the theatre, and that the general level is much more truly represented by the *Dance Theatre*. They concede the ambition, but deny the achievement.

Afterwards B. and a friend of his and I adjourned to the Rainbow Room at the Plaza. This is the resort of the High Muck-a-muck. Must dress. It is solemn, grandiose, and dull, and not the less so because it is all happening on a sixty-fifth story in Rockefeller Centre. Below us the New York floor is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold. These are the city lights. The twin-steeped Cathedral of St Patrick looks the size of a play-producer's model. Town mapped out in gold ink, white and cream taxis crawling like gilded beetles, the twinkling Hudson—all this is sublime provided your stomach can stand sublimity at this height.

Inside is something which not all the evening dress in the world can keep me from recognising as Blackpool Tower dolled up. We sit at a table remote from the dance floor and order cocktails. Can we have supper? M'yes, but only when the show, now starting, is over. Two dancers we remember from a Cochran revue. A girl with what Mrs Campbell would call a mouth like Tesman's bedroom slippers sings interminable songs by Cole Porter. A pianist plays a rain-

bow effusion of his own composing, not unlike the "Rainbow Trout" of Cyril Scott. Will somebody sing out five notes? Somebody does, and I reject the notion of possible collusion. The five notes are then used in an improvisation in the pianist's own manner, and then Bach's, followed by Gershwin's. How many combinations are there of twelve notes taken five at a time? My theory is that the pianist has worked them all out and has them up his sleeve. Will somebody sing out four tunes to be worked into a medley? "Pennies from Heaven," "St. Louis Blues," Chopin's "Nocturne" (no need to specify the number), and Brahms' "Cradle Song," here called "Lullaby." The medley consists of playing these in turn. We cannot leave because the pianist is blind and English. The lights go up, and we observe that nobody has been eating anything. We ask the damage, and are told seven dollars fifty cents. Say eight dollars. One pound twelve shillings and sixpence for three cocktails. Steep? B. says it's the covers, and I urge that we don't see any covers, and that you can't eat a floor show, however good it may be. We descend the sixty-five sick-making storeys and sup brilliantly at Tony's Bar in West 52nd Street, a tiny, well-conducted café with good food, quick service, and a Café Royal atmosphere. As this is our last night, we have foie gras, caviare, chicken à la King, and a really good bottle of Piper Heidsieck. But for my Restraining Influence, B., it would have been two bottles. Bed soon after three.

May 26 This has been our last day. We sail to-morrow *Wednesday*. literally at the earliest possible moment, one minute after midnight to-night. Farewell lunch at Passy's to Claud Grencker. I refuse to believe that he has had spies sitting next to us in the theatres to overhear and report our lightest whisper. I do not think he is as Machiavellian as people here try to make out. Yet when that slow, sweet smile of his subsides I see what they mean; the residue is something cut in lean grey stone. Everybody insists that in comparison with Schubert's intelligence organisation the Ogpu is sissy. I tell Grencker this; his smile

is slower to come than usual and quicker to go. It is only proper to say that wherever we have been we have found him at our elbow. I think of him now as a combination of sheet-anchor, shepherd, and dragon—a mentor to whom we are infinitely obliged.

Next, packing. Have had to buy another trunk, which still leaves me with eight huge parcels. Tips are difficult. There is a Swedish valet who looks as though he had not seen a sixpence since leaving Stockholm. There are three foreign floor-waiters, but none so imbecile as to be untippable. Four lift-boys. Two of these are Welsh—one pines for Blacnau Festiniog, in which he was born, the other for the Rhondda Valley, which he has never seen. Both have kept their accent. Five bell-hops. (By the way, the bell-hop is a myth. There are no bells and nobody hops. Errands here are run slower than in England.) Two porters, one of whom does our motor-bargaining for us. The receptionist, who will accept flowers. Macbeth's Three Witches, early risers who want to make our beds before we have got into them. That makes nineteen people to be tipped, twenty if we include the telephone girl. As a working rule we decide to give five dollars to any of those who smile at us, and ten to those who scowl. (Actually we got off with something under eighty dollars. This may seem excessive, but we got a lot done for it.)

Nathan called this afternoon to take me to tea with Lillian Gish. She came into the room looking exactly as she did in *Way Down East*. A sad, pinched little face, with woebegone eyes looking out from under a hat like a squashed Chinese pagoda. A trim, tiny figure very plainly dressed; the whole apparition strangely reminiscent of Vesta Tilley. Since she left films she has played Shakespeare, Tchekhov, and Dumas fils: "I came from the theatre, and I am glad to go back to it." Nathan has a theory that acting has nothing to do with the film or the film with acting, and that the proper function of the screen is to exploit the exuberant vitality of the Robert Taylors and Loretta Youngs, and discard all players as soon as they cease to exuberate. He

thinks Lillian was the last screen-actress. I talked a bit about her old pictures, and she seemed to like it. Anyhow she sat there silently, nodding like some grave flower.

May 27 Thursday. I think it was Wilde who said, "It is a terrible thing to part from people one has known a very short time." The same holds true of countries; though no truer, I suppose, of New York than of anywhere else. *Partir, c'est mourir un peu* was probably first said by Ulysses. Still, leaving New York is an emotional business. As B. was spending the last evening with his brother, I proposed to seek out the Stork Club, said to be the centre of the younger and rowdier fashionables—the kind of place to which in 1926 Evelyn Waugh's characters would have betaken their vile bodies. When it came to the point I couldn't face it, and instead went for a last drive round Central Park, with a snack at Tony's to finish with. Would have had another look at Harlem if I had not paid off my guide. Left Tony's at 10.45, and was on the Hamburg-Amerika liner *Deutschland* by eleven. This boat is half the size of the *Bremen* and prettily done up in *rose tendre* and old gold. Full of Germans, whereby frumpishness sets in again. If Schiaparelli herself dressed these women they would revert to German before she got out of the room. A great crowd to see us off and a great waving of handkerchiefs, which begins at the first sign of departure and lasts till we actually move off. It is stiflingly hot with that curious quality of steam-heat I shall always associate with New York. This accounts for the mist, at first pierced only by the Neon tower of the Empire State Building, and later by a weak glimmer which is probably Radio City. Farther down the river and leaving the docks the mist clears, and we see some of the lesser skyscrapers, whose alternating panes of light and dark give them the air of cosmic crossword puzzles. (For three weeks I have been wondering what familiar thing they are like.) Twenty minutes later we drop the pilot—a bit of routine which the spotlight of the parent ship turns into a shot from a film. And now New York



Lillian Gish

begins to fade from my consciousness. Or would do if B. were not whistling "Where or When" from *Babes in Arms*, the first piece we saw and the one I enjoyed most, musical comedy though it is! I think its sixteen-year-old naïveté gave me some foretaste of this still new and still raw country.

But a country which made an immediate and immense effect on both of us. I suppose I ought to be ashamed to confess it, but the truth is that the thing which has interested me least in America is the theatre. Montague once said of a certain actress's Juliet that he was glad to get out into the street again: "It was jolly to look at the carts!" Similarly I found New York's streets more exciting than its plays, its skyscrapers more heart-shaking than its stage décor, its manners quainter than their stage simulation. But since to find the Beefeaters at the Tower and the pearlys of Poplar more novel than the London stage would be no criticism of that stage, so I must put novelty on one side and try to take an unstartled view of the American theatre.

First as to the playhouses. These are drab and forbidding. Wherever you note a lull in the street's excitement, be sure your eye is resting on a theatre. The floors of the inadequate foyers are invariably littered with envelopes discarded by ticket-holders. Box-office manners are those of booking-offices at English railway stations. Americans go to the theatre as unceremoniously as to the cinema. Except on first nights they do not dress. Programmes are free. Applause is grudging. There are many exits, and after each act everybody pours out from the Turkish bath atmosphere into the draughty street. No smoking anywhere, even at revues.

Let me summarise what of the season's programme is left to run through the summer. 1. Last year's farce about Boy meeting Girl. 2. A farce about life at a military institute. 3. A serious play acted principally by youngsters and showing how gangsters are made. 4. A fantasy about excursionists and an island. 5. A romantic comedy about campers.

6. A poetic fantasy about ghosts on a mountain. 7. Shakespeare's *Richard II*. 8. A drama about natives of Georgia. 9. *Tovarich*. 10. *Victoria Regina*. 11. A hitchy—the word is current and legitimate here—comedy at the expense of New York's smart women. 12. A light comedy about Free Love. 13. A domestic farce. 14. A musical comedy. 15. A revue. 16. A musical comedy called *Sea Legs* and which appears not to have found them. 17. W.P.A. productions. From this list one might argue a drama barren of heart. Let me put aside the Shakespeare and the Housman, *Tovarich*, which is French, and *High Tor*, which is fake. (It's out at last!) This leaves only two plays which appeal to the emotions—a lean feast for those who, like myself, belong to the lump-in-the-throat school of playgoing.

Americans hold the expression of direct emotion to be ham, and devote their energies half to shunning emotion and half to attaining it by implication. This is why their tragedies are written in the key of farce. Robert Sherwood's *Idiot's Delight*, which I have read but not seen, since it is playing 1000 miles away, is the stuff Shaw would be writing to-day if he were sixty years younger. This means that I must regard Sherwood as the most significant young playwright on either side of the Atlantic? I do. I find the American public to be more theatre-minded than the English. It is alive to its theatre. It is at once receptive and critical.

About the American stage as a whole I feel that it is immensely vital and open to new forms. Not only open, but questing. This springs out of the American sensitiveness to lack of a past. That which cannot vie with yesterday must be the surer of to-morrow. That which has never learned to walk must be the first to run. The tree which has no roots must flower earlier. This may be poor physics and worse botany. But it is good human nature and doubly good American human nature. Direct Emotion belongs to your old world, America says, and we cannot beat you at it. But what about Indirect Emotion? Have the Tragic Muse chew gum! Have the next Hamlet say:

O what a louse and sonofabitch am I!

And now about one or two other matters. Production is invariably good. The general level of acting among women is higher than in London, though I cannot hear of, and certainly have not seen, an Edith Evans. The quickfire comedians beat ours, but otherwise, and apart from Alfred Lunt, there are no actors. There is nobody over here with the quality of Charles Laughton, John Gielgud, Laurence Olivier, Ralph Richardson, Stephen Haggard, Robert Eddison, Alec Clunes, to mention only a few. Of the older school there is no sign of a Martin-Harvey, a Seymour Hicks, or a Godfrey Tearle. The one exception to the foregoing is Burgess Meredith, an arresting young actor. But they tell me he is limited to the type of romantic hick or hobo, and can speak no English outside the idiom of "Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin' them two guys?"

This is the last sentence in a little book recommended me by Brentano's and called *Of Mice and Men*, by John Steinbeck. This heart-rending tragedy of two tramps—one is an idiot shot by his crony that he may not be lynched—has extraordinary power and beauty. This and *Idiot's Delight*—a book I could have read at home and a play I did not see—have been the high-spots of my visit. Add, in lighter vein, the lilt of Hart and Rodgers' score, which has danced its way through everything I have seen and given this hard-boiled city a dreamlike quality.

Or is it nightmare? The sum of my impressions is like one of those kaleidoscopic, catherine-wheel shots with which the film depicts the mind of a man reeling under the bludgeon. Here let me offer a hint. The newcomer to this country should take care not to arrive in the morning, or to choose some hotel remote from Broadway. At night the lighting—a blaze and a frenzy exceeding Piccadilly Circus and reaching to Knightsbridge—gives Broadway a certain garish splendour. By day it is a dreary succession of candy-stores, drug-stores, cheap eating-houses, shoe-shine parlours, hot-dog stalls, newspaper-stalls, bars, tailors' shops, gambling-booths, photographers, cheap jewellers, and gimcrackery of

all sorts. You have to wash the mind clean of Broadway before you can appreciate all that dignity and grace upon which it is a blot. For New York has been superbly planned. The streets are endless glades and the skyscrapers giant trees in a super-seemly forest.

Harlem also has a unity. You are aware of the sense of family as soon as you turn out of Central Park into 7th Avenue. Not a white face to be seen, and even the policemen are coloured. Brown niggers, yellow niggers, pale niggers, black niggers. Gay niggers and sad niggers. Old niggers with white hair and spectacles, young niggers dressed to kill with their yellow shirts, lavender suits, patent-leather shoes, huge cigars, and carnations in their buttonholes. The girls are often extremely pretty, delicious little creatures with melting eyes and crimped, blue-black hair. That part of the population which does not live out of doors hangs out of windows. It is largely vocal. The bucks lolling on the doorsteps chaff passing bucks; coal-black mammies exchange window confidences; piccaninnies play their shrill games under everybody's feet. A childlike, innocuous gaiety pervades the place, expressed in terms of rhythm through the radio pouring out of cafés, bars, taxis, beauty-parlours, and houses it would be absurd to call private. Everywhere the burr of soft speech and that sensuous appreciation which at night-time bathes the whole place in heliotrope lighting. An untinted glare is a solecism the negro never commits. The American view of him? This is simplicity itself. The negro does not exist.

The vaudeville artist in Sherwood's play asks the vamp whether she knows America and receives the reply: "Oh, yes. I've seen it all. New York, Washington, Palm Beach——" The man interrupts, "I said America." I too have seen it all—Broadway, Park Avenue, Central Park, Harlem. But I do not presume to deduce America from these. Or from a few theatre managers, actors, actresses, critics, night-club devotees, bar-tenders, taxi-drivers, waiters, shoe-blacks. New England has nothing in common with Old England except the name. And I am told that New England is not

at all representative of America proper. Whatever this last may be, it is something which has already created in me its own nostalgia.

June 18 Sunday. Ever since that skyline vanished in the fog I have been unable to get New York out of my blood. I brought back some records of *Babes in Arms* tunes, to which everything I saw in America danced. I can hardly bear to play them.

Have been extremely unsettled. Nothing has seemed worth while. I return to find England a land of warm soda-water and tepid lager. A London which goes to bed at eleven. On the evening of my return I went into the strangely shrunken Café Royal and heard the old voices babbling the old nonsense. "Imitation is the sincerest form of originality." "My dear, if floodlighting the imperceptible is genius, darling Virginia . . ." And so on. As for dramatic criticism, I have not the slightest desire to take up my pen again. Why should I? Jock has been superb, and he's thirty years younger. Gordon Hewart—we were on the *Manchester Guardian* together over thirty years ago—asking how America had affected me, I hinted at some of the above. His lordship said, "Forget it!" Maurice Ingram, on leave from Rome, said much the same thing, and pointed out that as Counsellor of Embassy he has similar small, but agonising, heart-breaks every three years.

I tried hard to pull myself together. Did all sorts of English things. Went to Beaconsfield and sauntered about the Buckinghamshire lanes. Visited three London theatres and saw three successes "bulging with improbability," as Jock said in his damnably clever notice of one of them. To-day is the end of a locum-tenency highly appreciated by the S.T., and for which I am very grateful. Feeling rather fagged, he asked me on Friday *whether I would write my article for him*, and for how much? This gave me the first laugh since I got back. Had a look at the first part of this diary, and savagely tore out 70,000 words,

which before going to America I thought quite good. Went to Lord's and watched half an hour's cricket and two hours' rain. Listened to the club bores describing the America of their time. Finally, to-day being Sunday, I took the car to Brighton, and lunched in a forest of lampshades, consoles, and flower-pots of a hideousness not to be encountered in U.S.A. I think it is going to take some time to reconcile me to the land of my birth.

Breathes there a man with a soul so fond
Who never to himself hath groaned,

etc., etc.

June 14 Letter from the *New York Herald-Tribune* inviting me to become their London Drama Correspondent. I am to say what I like, without regard to susceptibilities on either side of the water.

June 15 Invitation from the Organising Committee of the *Tuesday*. 5th Soviet Theatre Festival to go to Moscow in September as its guest. Nothing doing. I would go as a private individual. But to be shown Russia in an omnibus with a guard to pull down the blinds whenever we pass an execution squad, to be cooped up in theatres willy-nilly gaping at *Theatre Arts Monthly* scenery and listening to a jargon of which I don't understand a single word, to be denied liberty or alternatively to be spied on—no, thank you!

June 16 'Alibi' continues to make strides. Here is *Wednesday*. a cutting from an account of the defeat of Miss Barton in the British Women's Golf Championship:

She swung all out for a mighty brassie second shot, over-swung, lost her balance, just saved herself from a fall by placing a hand on the ground, and severely wrenched her left ankle. She was badly lamed but continued. She refused an alibi.

June 17 When I was on the *Deutschland* I got in the *Thursday*. habit of walking round to the other side of the boat to see if it was less tedious. Now I find

myself doing the same thing with bores. In the foyer at first nights I spin like a teetotum.

June 18 Happy thought! Must write to Seymour Hicks *Friday*. telling him that my American journey has made me eligible for blackballing at the Travellers' Club as well as the Garrick.

June 19 Barrie died early this morning. His was an irritating genius, which never left one in doubt either about the genius or the irritation. *Dear Brutus* and *A Kiss for Cinderella* are pure gold. *Mary Rose* is enormously helped by O'Neill's music, and I always succumb to it even when poorly acted. I have come to hate *Peter Pan*. The ideal audience for this would be a house composed entirely of married couples who have never had any children, or parents who have lost them all. Barrie was a master of plot and invention, though the informing spirit was always the same. You could tell what a new play of his would be like, though not, as the Scotch say, "what like it would be." His stuff could have been written in any age; if its author had lived in the era of Waterloo he would merely have put the characters in *Quality Street* back to the time of Bannockburn. The theme of *The Boy David* would have been too much for him at any time. You cannot bind the influences of Pleiades with baby-ribbons.

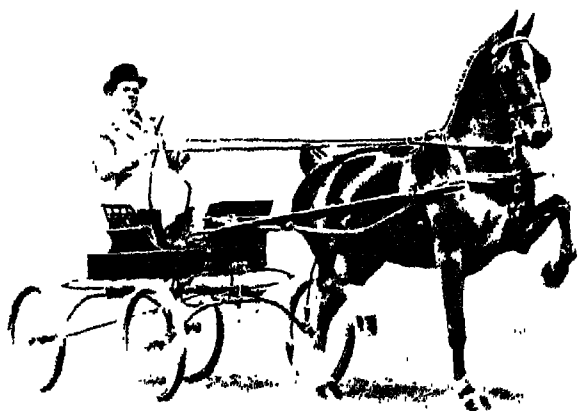
June 22 Ego, the horse, is engaged in the long and tedious business of knocking at the door. Last year he was recognised as the champion novice. This year he has to meet all the old stagers and reigning champions. At the National Show at Reading early this month there was much discussion as to whether he should not have beaten Nanette, who after a protracted contest was given the award. At Richmond Nanette won with something in hand; this was the most forceful showing I have ever seen that great mare make. Nigel Colman's splurgy, melodramatic stallion, Spotlight, was placed second, and Ego third,

though R. G. Heaton, who was judging, came to me next day and said he thought he had done wrong, and that if he had to judge the class again he would reverse the award for second place. R. G. is by general consent the finest judge of a harness horse in the world, and there is the grim possibility that his judging may be followed by other judges throughout the season. At the try-out at Olympia this morning Nanette was placed first, Ego second, Wensleydale Madge third, Spotlight fourth, and All Trumps, Tulip's old enemy, fifth. It all depends how they go to-night. I thought Albert nursed Ego a bit too much this morning; probably both man and horse were a shade over-anxious.

Later. To-night's judging was farcical. Nanette sailed round the ring once, and that was that. Then they pulled in Madge, whom we beat comfortably at Dublin and Richmond, and to whom we normally never give a thought. Next Ego. All this time the crowd was cheering for Spotlight, who in his show up and down the stand put up a really tremendous performance, everything about his action wrong, but grandly wrong. It was as though Beachy Head had become detached from the mainland and was putting out to sea at four knots. To satisfy the crowd the judges threw them Ego as a sop. This was nonsense. Either Spotlight was first or, if a judge won't have that kind of action, last. To put him half-way up the class was ridiculous. After which the judges were so aghast at what they had done that they shut down the class without more ado. If I had been judging I should have placed the animals as follows: 1, Spotlight; 2, Nanette; 3, Ego; 4, Madge; 5, All Trumps.

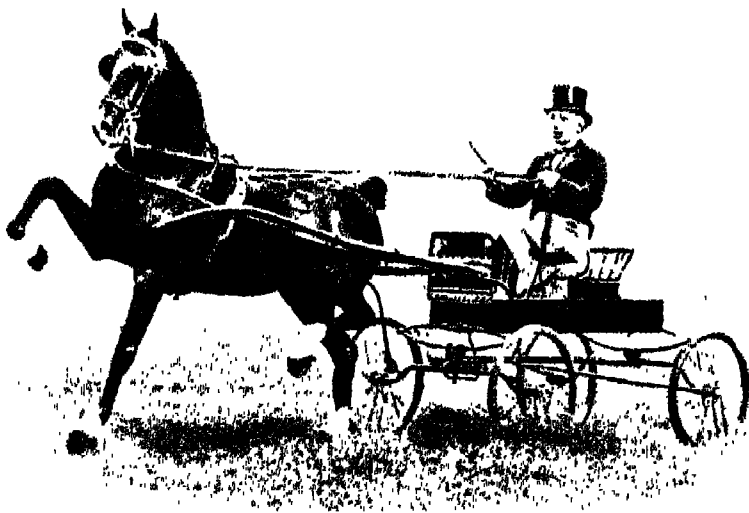
June 24 Am invited to spend the week-end on Lord *Thursday*. Kemsley's yacht. Ernest Fenton said, "Better be careful what you wear, James, or you'll look like something in charge of sea lions." Lord K.'s secretary 'phoned instructions this morning about a yachting-cap; I remember that Monty Shearman was furious with me for taking a bowler down the Loire!

Have composed the following costume: Pair of white



Nanette

Ego



Photos Rouch

Spotlight

gaberdine trousers, cleaned, but originally very expensive, with double-breasted jacket to match, also cleaned. Not being new looks as if I was used to yachting. Blue double-breasted blazer from Moss Bros., in case the white is not correct. Had the brass buttons removed and black ones put on. Two pairs of *darned* white socks—a neat touch. New white buckskin shoes. White sweater, and, of course, the cap. Have plenty of soft white shirts which I wear with a stiff white collar. Navy blue tie. Am thinking of sleeping to-night in this rig-out so as to get accustomed to it. Irving always did this with a new suit of armour.

June 28 Monday. The whole thing was an enormous success. A lovely yacht—750 tons, with a crew of 28—and a charming passenger-list. It was a thrilling moment when we passed the *Berengaria*, a blaze of lights, waiting to take my first article to America. We left Southampton on Friday about seven. Lay off-shore for a few hours and started the serious business of yachting after I had retired to a state-room in white satin evoking Evelyn Laye. Got to Deauville about eleven o'clock on Saturday morning. Deauville was like a bit of Eastbourne out of sorts. The season had not begun, and the fashionable part of the town was empty. But of an absolute emptiness! The milords, accompanied by their miladies, marched in procession from the yacht, along the quay, round the front, and back to the yacht again without meeting so much as a cat. The summer flower is to the summer sweet, and perhaps the same applies to the characters in Debrett's entertaining romance. There was one ecstatic hour after lunch when Time stood still, everybody else had gone to the Casino, and I was allowed to read and doze in the miraculous afternoon light with the snowy sleeves of myrmidons insinuating whiskies-and-soda at my elbow and as noiselessly retrieving the empty goblets. In the evening the town woke up. There was a waiters' fête and a torchlight procession, a Saturnalia before the season's work of robbing the English begins. When I woke on Sunday morning we were well in the Seine, an extremely beautiful river.

Coal-barges from Glasgow dipped to us; we exchanged friendly greetings with a German steamer; some French lads bathing from a skiff permitted themselves to chaff us, possibly not knowing how well-bred we were. All was as gay as possible. Went ashore at Caudebec, a sleepy village with an exquisite sixteenth-century church. Bought the usual souvenirs and showed a little kid of seven, Jacques Something and son of the hotel chef, over the yacht, which he said was "très beau." His self-possession and manners were perfect, and he looked delightful sitting in solemn state in the launch with three ship's officers to escort him back. Ought to have gone to Rouen by car, but preferred to stay on deck playing bridge in an ecstasy of sun and wind. The bridge was ecstatic also, as by tea-time Beverley Baxter and I had taken over 5000 points out of our host and Lord Bessborough. But pride goes before a fall, even on a yacht, and I shall never forget an unhappy rubber of 3700 points which Bax and I lost together, he at a pound a hundred and me at half a crown. We got back to Southampton at nine o'clock this morning, and I at once settled down to the dreary job of making a witty article out of a lot of witless books snored over on Saturday afternoon while the others were taking money from the croupiers at Deauville Casino. What the article will read like I don't know. Jock, to whom I have just finished dictating it, says it is all about the French quality of light, the lace-work of those old French masons, Lady Kemsley's talk and jewels, and the poise of Lady Maureen Stanley. The only time I felt out of my element was on the first night in the drawing-room after dinner, when the talk was largely about "Squiffy's" eldest and "Snooty's" second. Reflecting that in all probability the allusion was to the issue of some Duke and Marquis, I felt the same awe that David Copperfield experienced at Mrs Waterbrook's dinner-party.

Week-end closed with the happy thought of writing to Seymour suggesting that I am now eligible for blackballing by the Royal Yacht Squadron as well as by the Travellers' and Garrick Clubs.

July 2 So Daly's is to be pulled down, and quite time
Friday. too if it cannot do better than *No Sleep for the Wicked*, the Sexton Blakish melodrama produced here last night. During the last ten years this theatre has fallen on evil days, and I cannot remember attending any of its first nights without dread. In the nineties it was a storm-centre; Augustin Daly was the centre, and G.B.S. the storm. Now in Leicester Square there will presently be five cinemas and no theatres, where formerly there were three theatres and no cinemas. Nations get what they want in the long run, and the long run is precisely what speculators in the entertainment trade are out for.

For years I have been stressing the unwillingness of the London public to like the theatre, musical or otherwise, for its own sake. *Abraham Lincoln* succeeded because the author played the title-rôle for a couple of nights. *The Farmer's Wife* succeeded because two thousand clergymen were invited to a matinée and a thousand got in: the rest hopped about Sloane Square like crows. *The Apple Cart* succeeded because it was produced in the Malvern Hills in the middle of an August heat-wave. Nobody in London goes to any theatre unless it is the thing to go to that theatre. Now, just as distance lends enchantment to the view, so un-get-atableness lends *thingness* to theatres. Take Glyndebourne. Does anybody believe that these smart audiences would o'er the Sussex downs so freely if, when they got to Christie's theatre, they had to see the performance through leper's-squints with their fashionable presence unbeknownst to other fashionables? The whole case has been put once and for all by Johnson, when Boswell said there was not half a guinea's worth of pleasure in seeing the Pantheon :

JOHNSON. But, Sir, there is half a guinea's worth of inferiority to other people in not having seen it.

BOSWELL. I doubt, Sir, whether there are many happy people here.

JOHNSON. Yes, Sir, there are many happy people here. There are many people here who are watching hundreds, and who think hundreds are watching them.

July 5 My godson, Tony Baerlein, has gone to Spain, *Monday.* presumably to film the war. He received the invitation at tea-time, and in the teeth of all opposition caught the midnight to Hull, with almost no luggage except his camera, and less money.

July 6 While I was in America Brother Edward borrowed four shillings from Alan Dent, and *Tuesday.* presently started to repay the loan. First a postal order for a shilling, and then four three-halfpenny stamps. This is very like Edward. Jock wrote that these dribblets were all nonsense, and that he would rather have the balance in the form of a quotation. This arrived by return :

Take away but the pomps of death, the disguises, and solemn bugbears, and the actings by candlelight, and proper and fantastic ceremonies, the minstrels and the noise-makers, the women and the weepers, the swoonings and the shriekings, the nurses and the physicians, the dark room and the ministers, the kindred and the watches, and then to die is easy, ready, and quitted from its troublesome circumstances. It is the same harmless thing that a poor shepherd suffered yesterday, or a maid-servant today; and at the same time in which you die in that very night a thousand creatures die with you, some wise men and many fools; and the wisdom of the first will not quit him, and the folly of the latter does not make him unable to die.

(From a sermon of Jeremy Taylor.)

Jock, realising that I am grabbing this superb thing for my diary, demands the half-crown which it cost him. This is like Jock. I immediately pay him, which is unlike me.

July 7 Rose at nine with the consciousness of a full *Wednesday.* day before me. Began with a long consultation on the 'phone with Albert Throup as to how we are to handle Cassilis Sonnet, the pony I brought back from the States, at his first show, the Royal, to-

morrow. He is two ponies. Let him go as he likes, and he is, as Osric said of Laertes, "an absolute gentleman, of very soft society," but rather less than "great showing." But try to make him go as you like, and here are Osric's "excellent differences" with a vengeance—that little tail swishes like a windscreen-wiper in delirium, and you look to see the front of the trap stove in at any moment. We decided to 'have a go' and risk the pony having one also. It doesn't matter whether a middling performer is out of hand or not—nobody wants him. Equally it matters very little whether a great performer is unmanageable or not. Everybody wants him, for everybody is vain enough to think that he can do the managing. One of the reasons I want to show him is that Rose Knight has not come on as we hoped either in action or looks. Have decided to put him back for another twelve months.

Between ten and twelve washed (not much), breakfasted (hardly any), and dictated 1600 words on the Nature of Farce. At twelve rushed off to Lord's to see Oxford try to get 160 runs in the fourth innings. The lunch places being crowded, went to Canuto's, running into Fay Compton and her secretary. Fay was full of the difficulty of rehearsing *Julius Cæsar*, studying *Comus*, and playing *The Dream* simultaneously. She wants to play Lady Macbeth.

Back to Lord's to see R. C. M. Kimpton hit up 45 runs in 24 minutes, including the winning 4, an off-drive which also gave him his fifty. A great bat in the making, and I'm grieved to learn that he's an Australian. Home again at four and turned out a notice of last night's farce. Wrote up to here in to-day's diary and broke off to do 1200 words by hand for the *New York Herald-Tribune*.

Later. Dressed, dined—not because I wanted food, but because I get ill if I don't have any—and took Julian Philipson to first night of Owen Nares' new play, *They Came by Night*. Supper at Café Royal, after which Julian returned home with me and took down at my dictation *two* notices of the silly play—one for the *S.T.* and the other for America. Bed at three.

July 8 Got up at seven and motored to Wolverhampton
Thursday. for the Royal Show. Sonnet was quite rightly placed *last*. All because of his deplorable manners. Half the time he stood up on his hind legs and the other half on his front ones, with his heels careering round Albert Throup's head. A dazzling display, but not what judges like. Old Jacoby, my brother's music-master, used to say at the end of some trio or quartet: "Gentlemen, we finished together, and that is something." Albert, Sonnet, and the trap all came out of the ring together, and that was something. Throup is not altogether hopeful about Sonnet, and I am beginning to think that while exquisite to look at he will not have enough action.

Motored to Disley in Cheshire, and dined with my old friend Fred Dehn. D. told me of a village meeting at which the Disleyites proposed to send their cast-off clothing to Spain. He warned the meeting of the folly of this, telling it that his business had taken him all over Spain, and that he knew Spanish women well enough to know that they would rather have all their clothing bombed off them and remain naked than go about in Disley's cast-off fashions. He was howled down. D. says that Spaniards take no interest in death, whether it comes to themselves or to anybody else: "They kill when they feel like it, and go on playing cards."

English people have no notion of the Latin temperament. A man in the Civil Service told me the other day that Mussolini is convinced that our present policy is dictated by a wild desire to avenge England's recent humiliation. I asked what that was, and was told the Abyssinian affair. I was further told that the statement that I, an average Englishman, had entirely forgotten all about the whole business would (a) not be believed and (b) be regarded as a calculated insult. At the moment this country doesn't care a damn about Mussolini, Hitler, or Franco. It is entirely concerned with Joe Louis, Max Schmeling, and Tommy Farr. Discussing Farr's chances of becoming a world champion, to-night's evening paper says: "No *alibi* concerning a twisted cartilage can rob Farr of the credit for his beating of Neusel."

July 9 Ego went superbly to-day, and in every opinion
Friday. except that of the judge won the class from Spot-light and Nanette with any amount to spare. Whereas their action was fighting and laboured, his was as effortless as a breaker in the Atlantic. He looked absolutely lovely and satisfied the most captious, the judge coming up to me afterwards and saying it was a pity he is half a hand smaller than the others. I didn't in the least mind going down once again to established reputations. When an animal goes as Ego went to-day there is, as Montague said about Duse and Bernhardt, "no less or more, but only a sense of boundless release of heart and mind."

July 11 I found this beautiful thing in the "In
Sunday. Memoriam" column in the *Times* one day last week :

R.A.—All the beautiful time is yours for always, for it is life that takes away, changes and spoils so often—not death, which is really the warden and not the thief of our treasures.

July 12 A nice letter from Lieut.-Col. Christian about my
Monday. notice of his son's book. In 1928 John Hornby, youngest son of A. N. Hornby the cricketer, went exploring in the extreme north of Canada. He took with him Harold Adlard, aged twenty-eight, and Edgar Vernon Christian, Hornby's cousin, aged eighteen. All three died of starvation, Hornby on April 16, 1927, Adlard on May 4, and, judging from the boy's diary, Christian a month later. The record, naïve and harrowing in the extreme, has no word of fear and is rightly called *Unflinching*. It is on permanent view at Dover College.

Christian belonged to the same family as Fletcher Christian, of the mutiny on the *Bounty*. In a way I seem to be bound up with this family. One of my earliest recollections is the squat, dumpy little volume that came from my grandfather's at Horsham. (This was the first edition of 1881.) Then there was an old second cousin of my father's—Miss Ann Agate, "Aunt Ann" we always called her. She was a

character, and kept a Berlin-wool shop in Dorking, which failed owing to the proprietor's habit of closing the shop for two hours every afternoon in order that she might peruse the *Times* without interruption. In my recollection she was always eighty-two, and sported mob-caps which were both imposing and jaunty. She was very tiny and slightly hump-backed, and was never seen out of black silk at any hour or season. Rehabilitating her fortunes cost my father no end of money. We were all very fond of her, and shop or no shop she was a great lady.

Aunt Ann once told me that "some of the Agates" were "in part descended"—I do not know how this feat is achieved—from Midshipman, afterwards Lieutenant, Heywood, court-martialled for the *Bounty* affair and pardoned. Twenty-five years after the mutiny Sir Thomas Staines, cruising in the *Briton* between the Marquesas and Valparaiso, encountered an uncharted island some five miles long. He was hailed from the shore in *English* by a handsome, naked, red-brown savage. This was Thursday October Christian, son of John Adams, last survivor of the mutineers. The concernancy? Simply this: that in 1928 I lived in Doughty Street, and over me lived a captain in the merchant service whose ship, once every two years or so, called at Pitcairn Island. Hearing he was to call on his next voyage, I sent the Islanders some small comforts—castor-oil and port, if I remember right—and received in return three oranges and a letter written by another Thursday October Christian, grandson or great-grandson of the first. It was Fletcher Christian, the ringleader, who, as his men put Bligh over the side, said, "That, Captain Bligh—that is the thing—I am in hell! I am in hell!" Young Edgar Christian, dying alone in Canada, was in hell, yet kept silent about it, and his diary shows that he resisted panic.

July 13 It seems that some fields can never be completely
Tuesday. gleaned. To-day's *Manchester Guardian* has a story about Sarah Bernhardt which is new to me, and which, if I don't rescue it, will be lost for ever :

Some thirty years ago Sarah Bernhardt was playing at Manchester, and one afternoon she took a drive with a friend into the country. As they were passing a field they heard shouts and stopped the landau. Two local teams were playing a vigorous football match, and, it being a wet day, were smothered in mud. Sarah climbed up on to the seat and, clad from head to foot in white furs, watched the contest with eager interest. When it was over she climbed down and sank back on her cushions with a murmured: "J'adore ce cricket; c'est tellement Anglais."

Odd how the *M.G.* continues to be the best paper in the world! Here is Eric Newton on the Matisse exhibition:

To say that No. 15 is a picture of a lady in a voluminous blue dress seated on a red couch against a background of black delicately lined with white rectangles, and that the arms of the couch curl upwards in two vivid streaks of buttercup yellow, is to waste good words. Such a description could equally fit a bad picture or a good one. One must look elsewhere for the secret that makes Matisse a master. His lady is not a very interesting lady. She has no character. She has even no weight. She is a cardboard lady as unreal as the queen of hearts in a pack of cards.

And so on. This is as perfect a pen-picture of a Matisse painting as the Bernhardt anecdote is a picture of Sarah.

Have just come in from the revival of *Juno and the Paycock* at Kew. Magnificently played by the major half of the original company. There is a Michael-Angelesque largeness about Sinclair's *Paycock* which would have served Lamb as a peg for an essay on Irish gusto. Sara Allgood's *Juno* is still the heavenly dear she always was. It is inconceivably clever of O'Casey never to allow Joxer Daly to comment upon his patron's wife. Yet "He's a darlin' man!" applied to the *Paycock*, is never out of this rappitag's mouth. And what a rappitag—good Derbyshire word—poor Sydney Morgan's Joxer was! Tony Quinn acts well, but a curtain of memory comes between me and his performance. Maire O'Neill's Mrs Maisie Madigan has only to open her mouth and, as R.L.S. said of himself and Elizabeth

Bennet, I am at her knees. She is a harridan of the sort an Irish Jupiter would like to have round his footstool. "Her head's a work of art." The gorge of London's old-time barmaids would have risen with envy of the beads and trinkets rising and falling on that fluttered bosom on which ever and anon a hand is genteelly placed. What an artist! When this vulgar she-toper must comfort Juno she becomes the consoler of all the broken. A minute later she is screaming down the staircase: "As far as I can see, the Polis as Polis, in this city, is Null and Void!" It would be impossible for anybody who has not heard Molly spit out this execration to realise the grief, rage, malice, contempt, fun, and drink which are its components.

July 15 Am writing this in the lounge of the Granville *Thursday*. Hotel, Ramsgate, where I have come on from the Kent County Show at Canterbury. Sonnet went better to-day and kept his heels on the floor. Last but one, instead of last. Everybody praises his looks, but looks alone won't do.

July 16 Canterbury again. Ego second to Nanette in the *Friday*. under 15 hands class. Both went superbly, and the judges were a long time about it, sending us out together several times. Ego is the more beautiful pulled up, and his action is always the purer. But Nanette at her best is a more extravagant goer, her additional six years help her, and that other inch and a half in height counts a lot when it comes to a near thing. She *fills* the eye more. Also she has a genius for single shows up and down the grand stand that I have never seen equalled. I told the judges I was perfectly satisfied, which I was; I should, in their place, have done exactly the same. The championship class was contested equally hotly. Nanette won, with Ego reserve. Next came Pollux, this year's Olympia winner in the over 15.2 class. Then the pony High and Mighty, winner at the National. Hollywell Squire, this year's novice winner at Olympia and the National, was fifth. Supper at the Savage Club, where I

tried to tell Victor MacClure all about Ego. Instead of which he insisted on my listening to something about fish, and fish are not interesting.

July 17 Saturday. When I was at Kew earlier in the week I met an Indian of great culture and distinction. It was his first visit to London, and he had relieved the monotony of two oceans and two seas by anticipatory tasting of the London theatre. I asked him which plays he had been to. He said he had seen several pierces about young gentlemen in deck-chairs and dinner-jackets. There had also been something about a bat in a belfry, and one or two jokes about murder, "which in your country seems to be no serious matter." He added that O'Casey's play was the only jewel out of our treasure-house which had been vouchsafed him. He thought it was typical of English pride that, having a storehouse of such treasures, we preferred not to display them, or, at least, only one at a time. I bowed, and he bowed, and the people standing round about us bowed. After which I passed with bowed head into the auditorium to resume looking at the great play for which it seems there is to-day no West End audience. Unless, of course, they play it on skates.

About the thing at the Coliseum, the skating show called *St Moritz*, I am in a difficulty, because unfortunately it is entirely drawn from my phobias, complexes, and *bêtes noires* in general. To begin with, I loathe skating, and as a schoolboy slid once, but only once. As a rational person I must believe that it is irrational to embark upon something which you cannot stop when you want to. I shall never forget the terror which seized me in the middle of my first and only slide when I discovered that I had left powerful mind at the mercy of powerless feet. Even when I played the piano I trembled at any passage marked *glissando*. I shall not have a good word to say of this show on Sunday, except that it is nowhere sentimental. Its concocters have had the grace to realise that *on ne patine pas avec l'amour*.

July 18 Passing through Westerham to-day, I noted
Sunday. how the statue of General Wolfe brandishing
 his sword looked exactly like Mozart conducting
Don Giovanni.

July 20 Leo said: "After forty-five only two things
Tuesday. matter—to be amused if you've got money, and
 amusing if you haven't." He has found a name
 for Charles Morgan's criticisms in the *Times*. He calls them
 Morgan Voluntaries.

July 22 Bought one of the new 80-h.p. Chevrolets at
Thursday. £345. Am beginning to preen myself on my
 motor deals. I paid £190 for my second-hand
 Studebaker, and am now turning it in at £130 after getting
 12,000 miles out of it in 5 months. A superb engine. We
 left Monmouth show-ground on Tuesday at six o'clock and
 were at the flat just before ten, stopping half an hour for
 tea. 144 miles in 8½ hours, or an average of 41 miles an
 hour, is good going. But I have a suspicion that it is the
 Indian summer which precedes a general break-up. The self-
 starter now only acts by a miracle, and as there is no fix-
 ture for a starting handle it is always doubtful whether we
 can get off at all. The brakes are all to pot, the steering
 likewise; she pinks on a hill, and is going to need re-boring.
 An economical good-bye is therefore indicated. My chauffeur,
 Charles Williams, is a fine driver, and the car might not go so
 well in other hands. Or in his if I keep it any longer.

Feeling strangely well on Tuesday morning, I rose with
 the lark, and while I was shaving composed this poem which
 will duly appear in my review of Lord Horder's *Health and a
 Day*:

Mister Korda
 Sent for Lord Horder
 Because of the strictures
 People pass on his pictures!

Highly pleased with this ebullition of unmitigated jollity,
 I then set off on a dawdling journey to the Royal Welsh
 Show at Monmouth. Sonnet is creeping up. First time out

he was last, then last but one, and yesterday he was last but two. As three out of the four in front of him were Onyx Zenophon, Barcroft Belle, and High and Mighty, all redoubtable winners and champions, I didn't at all mind, but I think perhaps we might have been fourth.

Ego wasn't quite at his best, off his feed and coughing a little. A good class of seven, and for some time I thought the Ringer would beat him, as the old horse was going extraordinarily high. For the first time in my life I was cross with Ego for not trying, since Albert didn't tell me till later about his being out of sorts. Presently, however, he pulled himself together and won, but with not so much to spare as I like.

Arrived home to find a delicious picture postcard inscribed :

Portrait of a distinguished critic being taken to task by a romantic young actor to whom he has given a bad notice. Discovered in Bamberg by Ernest Thesiger on his travels in Germany previous to sailing for America to pacify that country for the things said about her by the aforesaid D.C.

July 24 After expending a good deal of thought on the *Saturday*. subject I have come to the conclusion that all film criticism must be wrong which fails to recognise that any and every film is written to appeal, not perhaps to idiots congenital and village, but certainly to people of feeble mind. I am convinced that the vast majority of cinema-goers have the mentality of office-boys and mannequins. Stop the first motor-bike and ask the driver who Parnell was, and ask the young woman clasping his stomach to tell you about Katie O'Shea, and you will be rewarded with a blank stare. Ask them about Gladstone, and they will think you mean some earlier Gordon Selfridge who dealt in bags and collars. At names like Redmond, Healy, Davitt, Pigott, and Charles Russell the faces of to-day's young people take on unusual vacancy. Invite them to see a picture about the Irish politics of the eighties, and

they will stampede. But tell them that Clark Gable and Myrna Loy are showing, and they will tolerate the areas of dull, stodgy history for the sake of the love-sick episodes.

It all comes back to a principle which has never been put better than by Pryce Ridgeley in Pinero's *His House in Order*: "Some of our clergy are shamefully underpaid; I'm surprised we get the Gospel preached as satisfactorily as we do!" In view of the fact that all films are produced solely to please the shamefully under-educated I am surprised that a film like *Parnell* should be as satisfactory as, in many ways, it is. I am not disappointed that it fails to do justice to Mrs Schauflier's play. I didn't expect it to. I am not disappointed that Clark Gable gives nothing of the cold fire of Parnell's intellectuality; I didn't expect him to be more than a charming boor. I am not disappointed that Myrna Loy produces none of the fineness and subtlety of Margaret Rawlings's Katie O'Shea; she was never so good an actress. On the other hand, I am agreeably surprised at the brilliance of the scenes in the law-courts and the Houses of Parliament, and at the superb performances of George Zucco as Sir Charles Russell and Neil Fitzgerald as Pigott. The latter makes a wonderful picture—like Bernard Shaw, Anatole France, and the Ancient Mariner all rolled into one.

July 26 The *Manchester Guardian* has sent Jock to Mal-Monday. vern. To compensate his absence I have accomplished something which I have been trying to do for years. This is to crack a hard-boiled egg and extract it from its shell leaving the shell in one piece. You do it over a plate, and the smallest piece counts, even if it is no bigger than a pin's head. My previous record was two pieces. Yesterday, before witnesses, I did it in one. If I can't save money or arrest the progress of that disgusting harlot 'alibi' I have at least accomplished something, and can now say to myself, as Gautier's Théodore said to d'Albert, "Combien sont morts qui, moins heureux que vous, n'ont pas même donné un seul baiser à leur chimère!"



Ernest Thesiger admonishing the Author

July 28 Day made entirely happy through seeing over
Wednesday. a shop-front the name N. Taratooty. How
Dickens would have loved this !

July 31 Blackpool with Leo Pavia, whose malice in-
Saturday. creases. Man is a creature of habit, and it is
with genuine pleasure that I sit down at the
same desk, in the same lounge, in the same hotel as last
year and take up what is doubtless the same pen. I am
certain about the ink-splash on the wall. I remember mak-
ing it. I suppose it is the mark of the boulder to notice
the hotel staff. Anyway I am glad it has not changed,
except that the mite who attends to the lift is nearer heaven
by the altitude of a chopine. But my room has been
changed, and I am afraid that when I jumped out of bed
this morning and pulled up the blind for a good stare at
the weather I did not realise that the curtainless window
reached to the floor and that I was wearing my shortest
nightshirt. (I have never abided pyjamas.) Having gazed my
fill, and wholly unconscious of the gathering crowd on the
promenade below, I was beginning to shave when the hall
porter arrived with a policeman's compliments and would
the gent. on the first-floor balcony state wot 'e thought 'e
was up to. I said that the gent. sent half a crown and his
compliments, and would the officer kindly step up since the
gent. had a perfect *alibi* ! No more was heard of the matter,
and I am changing my room for one that faces a blank
wall !

At breakfast told Pavia all about this. Leo said,
"Schindler records the same thing happening to Beethoven
when he was composing the Ninth Symphony." Actually I
was trying to recall the words of a poem by Lytton Strachey
which appeared recently in a copy of the *New Statesman*,
which I found lying about a tea-garden in Staffordshire
yesterday. I cut out the poem, which is called *The Haschish*,
and here are some of the lines I was turning over in my
abstracted state :

All my thought,
 As heavy incense wanders into nought,
 In hanging dissipation drifts and dies
 Through subtle and through mystic harmonies,
 Where vague remembrance finds delicious fare
 —Looks that are felt, and lusts as light as air,
 And curious embraces like September flowers
 Vanishing down interminable hours,
 And love's last kiss, exquisitely withdrawn,
 And copulations dimmer than the dawn.

And again :

Enormous music, swooning over shores
 Drowned in autumnal grandeur, till the doors
 Of remote heaven swing round on oiled hinge
 Enchanted, and the faint evasive fringe
 Of all occult and unimagined joys
 Waves into vision—forms of golden boys
 Embraced seraphically in far lands
 By languid lovers, linking marvellous hands
 With early virgins crowned with quiet wreaths
 Of lily, frailer than the air that breathes
 The memory of Sappho all day long
 Through Lesbian shades of fragmentary song.

Perhaps it is as well the cop didn't come up. Perhaps years of patrolling the "faint evasive fringe" of Blackpool's foreshore may not have made him too sympathetic about "copulations dimmer than the dawn." Leo says a much better answer would be that no man in his senses motors 200 miles to commit an offence he can commit equally well at home. One of the sights of Blackpool is to watch the old thing surveying some tuppenny pleasure-steamer through a pair of opera-glasses given to his grandmother by Meyerbeer. "These glasses saw Malibran and Pasta and Tamberlik," he said to-day. "The leather still smells of 1840."

August 1 Sunday. Blackpool manners are super-normal, and in the matter of raiment the return to nature is striking.

The gay colours are worn by the men, and I saw one young male dazzling his female in a get-up consisting of black shirt and collar, trousers and suède shoes of black, relieved by a white jacket and white tie. Another favourite combination is baby-blue and canary. I saw one party of six males set off for a jaunt in a landau; their sweethearts were told to sit down, do nowt, and await their return.

Played eleven holes of golf yesterday with young Rawstron. The first time I have touched a club this year, and am surprised to find I never hit the ball better. The sort of game which would have bucked me up tremendously a year or two ago. But it's too late now, and renunciation begins. Proof of this is in the fact that I *forgot to bring my clubs*, and that I could limit myself to less than the full round. What this means is that the days of stern matches with assistant pros, who used not to be able to give me 4 bisques, are now over. And I think I would rather give up the game altogether than play with amateurs of no style. Half my fun in golf has been the intense pleasure I have got out of watching the professional stuff. But then I have never been able to stick amateurism in any form. I loathe amateur acting, and any golf-swing in which I cannot detect the caddie. Leo says that Cleopatra made a mess of her love-making the day she turned amateur. I shall probably not really give up golf so long as I can break 90; yesterday my score for 11 holes was 52. My excuse for recording all this is that it is of intense interest to me, and that as a fanatic for Arnold Bennett's *Journal* I am prepared to be absorbed in an entry telling me which sock he put on first. There are occasional weak moments when I pretend that I am writing for my old age. That wise old bird Leo quickly disposes of this: "Nonsense, James! You'll always be too busy writing *Ego* to read it. You remember what George Moore prophesied of Zola: 'One day he'll be found dead, *le nez dans le boudin*.' One day you'll be found dead, with your nose in *Ego* 25."

Later. This afternoon's golf much better, with a grand last hole. All square. Two perfect drives, J.A.'s slightly the longer. R. puts iron shot ten yards from pin. J.A. pulls into bunker biting into green; finds ball lying on hard, baked sand, plays explosion shot *à la* Hagen, so that ball sits down where it pitches eight feet from pin. R. is dead in three, half-closing the hole. J.A. squeezes past and in like a master, and for half an hour walks on air.

August 2 Letter from Lucile Watson playing the lead in *Monday*. the New York production of *Yes, My Darling Daughter*: "But oh, my dear Mr Agate, you should read what Mrs Campbell wrote me about *you*!"

August 4 Starting with a 2, did the first 9 holes at *Wednesday*. Lytham and St Anne's in 88. Fell away afterwards and finished in 83. Not bad for an old 'un!

August 5 Nothing to record except a tour of Ullswater, *Thursday*. Derwentwater, Thirlmere, Grasmere, etc., on a grand day of sun, cloud, and wind. At Rothwaite saw the little house from which, in my first long trousers, I set out with my mother on my first visit to London. Dined with Mrs Aspland, ninety-four, still playing a first-class game of bridge and holding all the cards.

August 6 Somebody signing himself "George Sampson" *Friday*. having sent to the *Times* on the subject of the Dumb Show in *Hamlet* a letter of which I entirely approve, I dispatched this postcard: "Bravo, Sampson! Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix!"

August 7 Dublin. Ego won his class from Wensleydale *Saturday*. Madge with something to spare. Lost the cup, getting reserve champion to one of the big blacks out of Bertram Mills's team. As B.M. had brought over a lot of horses, including a pony four-in-hand, I foresaw and didn't begrudge him this. Indeed, I congratulated him with reasonable sincerity.

Lovely day, grand show-ground, sparkling show. Am told that yesterday, with de Valera present, the crowd joined in singing the British National Anthem with extraordinary enthusiasm. Has this any significance? It has not, and one must imagine the denial spoken with the accent of that regretted and lovely actor, J. A. O'Rourke.

Met some delightful Irishmen, including Walter Starkie

and Montgomery, the film-censor for Ireland. The latter told me a story about one Charlie Hyland, manager of the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, and for many years a great figure. As he lived in retirement for fifteen years, his funeral was sparsely attended, one of the handful of mourners being the stage-carpenter, Martin Murphy: "'D'ye know,' sez he, 'if this had occurred during his lifetime the bloody place would have been packed!'"

August 8 So Lady Tree has gone. A kindly soul and a *Sunday*. delicious wit. It is always said that the line in Barrie's play apropos of boiler-scraping—"What fun men have!"—was one of her dress-rehearsal impromptus. I remember how, about to recite at a charity matinée, she advanced to a gold chair, and, swathed in heliotrope tulle, said smilingly, "I want you all to imagine I'm a plumber's mate!" In her early years her extreme plainness was a handicap. In later life her face became her fortune; it was that of a benevolent horse. In her old age she was an admirable actress who made the most of a good part, and got a lot that wasn't there out of a bad one.

August 9 Another great woman of the theatre, Miss Horniman, has died at the age of 77. She was the pioneer of the repertory movement, and founder of the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester. The first time I saw her was in 1907, at the Midland Theatre in that city. She had brought the Irish Players over from the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, and the programme consisted of Synge's *The Shadow of the Glen*, Yeats's *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, and Lady Gregory's *Spreading the News*. I could not decide which impressed me the more—the plays, or the plaque of opals in the form of a dragon blazing on the corsage of a dress of rich green brocade which swept the floor.

A lot of nonsense has been and will be written about Manchester's failure to support the venture at the Gaiety Theatre. The truth of the matter is that the Gaiety, after a brave start, let down Manchester badly. At the beginning,

with managers like Iden Payne, Basil Dean, and Lewis Casson, and players like Miss Darragh, Sybil Thorn-dike, and Henry Austin, all went grandly. Later, managers of lesser calibre were engaged, the plays became steadily drearier, and the players more purposefully amateur. Now, perhaps, it may be said that there never was a Manchester school of drama, but only an odd dramatist or two who happened to be born or to live in Manchester. Stanley Houghton's *Hindle Wakes* was a bright flash in what turned out to be a very small pan, and Harold Brighouse never followed up *Hobson's Choice*. The only first-class work of the so-called Manchester school was Allan Monkhouse's *Mary Broome*. But still the notion that there could be such a school persisted, as nobody knows better than I do. (I functioned as a dramatic critic on the staff of the *M.G.* all through this very period.) Time after time the curtain would go up on a Welsh dresser and a kitchen table with Sybil weeping in frustration. Sometimes the dresser would be to the left, sometimes to the right. But the table and Sybil were constant.

By an odd coincidence Ivor Brown says in an article in to-day's *M.G.*: "So far the British tradition has maintained the old, unfounded, unfair belief that the player is a rogue and the theatre an abode of sin." The belief may or may not be sound: it is the only one which has ever got the British public into the theatre. That, and plays about people in evening dress.

Now consider what happened at the Gaiety. By stripping the gold paint and all garish appurtenances, and substituting a décor of unrelieved white, the place was made as much like a schoolroom and as little like a theatre as possible. There was no drink licence, but only the horrid spectacle of intellectuals consuming cocoa. No orchestra, and in the intervals pale young men, who had not gone out to drink cocoa, nodded glumly to one another across Professor Herford's beard. Nobody wore evening dress, and when an actor must he wore it gauchely, with a shirt that wasn't too clean. The actresses' clothes made dressmakers weep. Over the whole place

brooded a joylessness, an air of edification, the suggestion of a theatre-going that was a part of citizenship. The better halves of men already too good wrote letters to the papers saying how heartening it was on wet nights to see actresses in mackintoshes sitting in last trams and grasping umbrellas *like ordinary mortals*. The last three words spelled the Gaiety's doom. The great actress Rachel left behind her a letter protesting her inability, after mouthing five acts of Alexandrines about tigresses passion-starved in Byzantine deserts, to go home to lonely sandwiches in fifth-rate provincial hotels. The general idea of a great actress—a regrettable idea which I share and endorse—is that at the end of the play she is whirled away in veil and barouche to an assignation with a dissolute nobleman, preferably of the Renaissance. (She need not do this, but must be thought capable of it.) The so-called Manchester school demanded actresses of respectability rather than glamour, a quality with which Welsh dressers do not consort. Lacking glamour, and knowing that they lacked it, Miss Horniman's leading ladies cottoned on to soul. I remember a scene in a Galsworthy play in which an ultra-soulful creature used to go to the window, open it, and flap her arms like the wings of a fowl. When I asked what this grotesque nonsense was supposed to mean, the actress—who was quite well known—said sepulchrally, "It's the soul in the act of liberating itself."

The non-Jewish part of Manchester might have been gammoned with this sort of thing indefinitely. But the Jewish part—which ran the Hallé concerts and has always been the chief support of the Manchester theatre—was a cultured and travelled audience not to be taken in by the Liberal and Ruskinian doctrine of morality and citizenship as the basis of dramatic art. The Manchester Jews knew a dowdy actress when they saw one, and perfectly understood what Balzac meant by "*l'honnête artiste, cette infâme médiocrité, ce cœur d'or, cette loyale vie, ce stupide dessinateur, ce brave garçon.*" They also knew that the basis of popular theatre-going five nights out of six must be that which Abel Hermant, in his devastating and utterly delightful

La Fameuse Comédienne, calls "la pièce chaste, un peu cochonne, avec une pointe de sentiment." In short, while they were prepared to accept masterpieces of gloom, they declined to tolerate inferior work just because it was depressing.

August 10 Picked up Ernest Fenton at Chester and came *Tuesday*. on to Southport, principally to be near the Henriques. Spent the rest of the day trying to locate the sulky and harness-box, lost in consequence of a squabble with the Irish Customs owing to the non-delivery of the papers necessary to release them. They were finally met and intercepted at a crossroads five miles this side of War-rington at two o'clock in the morning.

August 11 A day of extreme gloom, unprintable things *Wednesday*. happening to Ego at a little show near here.

It was only to be expected, since every owner of a good horse knows that it is always at the little, unsuspecting places that it gets dumped. The Henriques, whom I had entertained to an *al fresco* luncheon of hock and wasps, were more than sympathetic. But, alas, melancholy overcame me during the drive back to Southport! This was not improved by an article in the *M.G.* on "The Discipline of Obscurity." There it all was—Emerson's

It is time to be old,
To take in sail,

and Christina Rossetti's

. . . the dark hair changing to gray
That hath won neither laurel nor bay.

Tennyson and Bunyan too—in short, the whole caboodle, omitting only the line in English hymnology which, from my childhood up, I have most resented. This is the line :

Whate'er I prized, it ne'er was mine.

In the evening made a moody tour of the Marine Lake, and, at sight of its fairy lamps, Bridges of Sighs, illuminated gondolas, and what-not, something recovered my spirits.



*In the Horse-box: Albert Throup with Ego
and Sonnet*

August 12 To-day began elegiacally enough. Garstang is *Thursday*. one of the prettiest little show-grounds I know, squeezed in between church and river. The field slopes towards the grand stand—which is rickety rather than grand—and from the top side of the ring the little show is spread out before you like a map. Jock would tell me which English poet is best fitted to paint the admirable English scene, which is too much *alive* for Gray. Refreshment tent against churchyard wall, to which toothless greybeards turn their backs in supreme unconcern. Cheap-jacks offering to turn base metal into gold. Children patting meek, immemorial bulls, or struggling with wilful calves. Not an inch of room anywhere. The local band.

Sat next to Mrs Henriques and debated how far the judge, who yesterday was chief ring-steward, would be affected by the Lytham awards, seeing that to-day's entries are the same animals which yesterday had what Mrs Gamp called the "bragian imprence" to beat *Ego*. He turned out to be totally unaffected, thereby proving himself an honest and an upright arbiter, and not one of those judges who, as Ernest said, are not to be trusted without a jury. In other words, *Ego* won.

Dined at the Henriques' and talked Hackneys till the early hours of the morning. As it was very hot and thundery, with no actual peals, but a great deal of summer lightning, went for a spin round the Marine Drive. Behind us the skeleton of the deserted Pleasure Park, with the steel-work of the *montagnes russes* showing against the sky like giant ribs. In front a nothingness of sand, pierced by a powerful car speeding in the wake of its own spear-head of light along the rim of where, if there be sea at Southport, that sea must be.

August 14 Home again. A miserable seven-hour journey *Saturday*. yesterday in pouring rain and icy wind. Spent half the time devising plans of ferocious economy, and half in dreaming about my new set of irons and the two 3's with which I finished with Lytham and St

Anne's for this year. At a half I can still be sure of not losing to young pros, which means that there's still some fun to be got out of the game.

August 15 Sunday. People are continually asking me what is the connection between theatre and horses. The big

Hackney stud of my youth was the Brookfield Stud, owned by Burdett-Coutts, formerly Ashmead-Bartlett, who when he was thirty married Angela Georgina Burdett-Coutts, who was sixty-seven. Subsequently he took her name. It was with the old lady's money that the Brookfield Stud was run, and I of all people can have nothing to say against this, seeing that I would marry Gagool herself if the dam of Ego were part of her dowry. Now the Baroness inherited her money from whom? The *Enc. Brit.* with its usual prudery states that it came from her grandfather the banker. But only indirectly. It came directly from the Baroness's aunt, the Duchess of St Albans, formerly Harriet Mellon, the actress. Harriet's father had been post-master at Cheltenham, where he also kept a library. Later he became manager of the theatre at Portsmouth, 'featuring,' in to-day's jargon, his daughter. In 1814, when she was acting at Drury Lane, Harriet captivated and married Mr Coutts, who was possessed of the banking business and seventy-nine years of age into the bargain. Eight years later he died, and five years after that, in 1827, Harriet married her Duke. Before she died she told him that she intended to leave the bulk of her money to the Coutts family from whom she got it, and actually it was the crafty Angela who at the age of twenty-three nobbled the immense fortune. Crafty, because Angela had always treated her aunt as Cordelia treated her father. In 1871 her terrifying philanthropy made Angela a Baroness, and in 1881 she married Ashmead-Bartlett, who two years later became a member of the Hackney Society. But whereas Harriet had to support her banker for eight years only, the owner of the Brookfield Stud was tied to his Baroness for a quarter of a century, the old lady insisting on living to the age of ninety-two. Why

rake all this up now? Because it is exactly one hundred years to-day since Harriet Mellon died!

August 18 A long day. Caught the 7.25 from King's *Wednesday*. Cross and had my first attack of claustrophobia, which means I have been drinking too much whisky, or worrying too much, or something. Much relieved when the train stopped at Peterborough, when, of course, I had not the least desire to get out. Got over the attack on the principle, "If I die in the train, I die in the train. So what?" Unpleasant, all the same.

Charles met us with the car at Bradford, and we spent an altogether delightful day at Bingley Show, Ego getting reserve champion to Barcroft Belle. Had with me an authority on greyhound-racing from the *Sporting Life*, one Dennis Wray, son of the theatre manager who takes *Lilac Time* on its annual provincial tour. An agreeable young man who, on the way back, introduced me to the Trip to Jerusalem at Nottingham. The porter here was very affable and showed us Mortimer's Hole and all the other E. V. Lucas stuff, including the cellars and the fungus "excluding" from the beer. After which D.W. insisted on my seeing the Night Life of Nottingham, where I had some of the best chip potatoes I have ever eaten, and made the acquaintance of the famous Hubert Brooker, host of the Peach Tree and a smaller edition of Roy Byford. He told us extraordinary stories about a repertory company. This belongs to a Mr Harry Hanson, plays to two full houses nightly, turns thousands away, and has unpeopled the five local picture-houses, reducing their managers to tears. Set off back round about half-past ten under a glorious moon and arrived home, unless the clock at Golders Green lies, at 1.30 A.M. Even though the road was empty I call an average of 45 m.p.h. pretty good going for any car belonging to me. I think it was the exhilaration of the speed which made me lend a semi-consenting ear to the proposal that I should attend some autumn sale and buy a greyhound. Between Bedford and Luton we suddenly came upon an enormous

owl sitting in the road right in our path. Charles reckoned that it would rise and fly away, instead of which it insisted on outstaring our headlights. An unwise old owl!

August 21 If this diary is really to help the social historian *Saturday*. of the future in his reconstruction of the present, it must not omit this: Owing to hundreds of excited females saying good-bye to Robert Taylor, the film-star, the *Berengaria* was thirty minutes late in leaving New York last week. Two girls were found under the bed in Taylor's state-room. He shook hands with both, and one of them said, "I shall never wash this hand again!" This was telegraphed to, and printed in, a responsible English newspaper.

August 23 Brother Edward blew into Antrim Mansions one *Monday*. day last week to tell me my mind was too narrow. What educated man ever went to Blackpool? Why didn't I spend my holidays in Munich? Why don't I go to Russia? I made some feeble answer about a winter holiday with a peep at Egypt. Whereat Edward rubbed the end of his long, disapproving nose. "There's been no culture in Egypt for three thousand years!" he said icily. And departed.

Obedient to reproof, came down to Folkestone on Saturday. George Mathew staying here. On Sunday, still anxious to widen my mind, went to Boulogne, where I remember spending one of the happiest days of the War. I was with a man called Whympier, nephew of the famous climber who broke his leg in an after-dinner attempt to mount a lecture platform. We were on the way from Marseilles, reporting about something or other, and there was so much sea running that the boat service was cancelled, and we spent the day on the front shouting metaphysics through the gale. Yesterday the town seemed completely unchanged, except that on the previous night a fire had gutted the Casino, whose ruins still smoked. In the afternoon was a religious fête with processions of children and so forth, the entire

population turning out to sit on kitchen chairs. The odd thing about French widows is that they are always accompanied by a brother of the deceased, a walking blob of ink. We lunched at Mony's, not, I thought, quite so good as it used to be. But perhaps that was because it was Sunday and the place crowded. Spent the afternoon on the beach, reading next week's review books, George poring over what he calls *The Unpoetical Works of George Meredith*.

August 24 Still at the Royal Pavilion Hotel, Folkestone. *Tuesday*. Among the *biblia a-biblia* which litter this hotel's writing-room I found a bound copy of the *Graphic* for the first six months of 1889. I spent an enchanting hour among the things that were happening when I was twelve. Here are some of them.

Irving's *Macbeth*, grandly mounted, not so grandly acted. Otto Hegner, the boy pianist who wore a velvet Patience suit just like mine, is coming on hand over fist. Jean de Reszke has signed a contract with the Paris Opera at £600 a month. The London County Council has its first meeting and is photographed individually and collectively. Peall makes a break of 2038, the second highest on record. Oscar Wilde states that artists' models are a well-behaved and hard-working class, and that if they are more interested in artists than in art, so too is a large section of the public. Mrs Wilde has written an article on "Muffs." A reception has been given at the Town Hall, Birmingham, to the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., and his American bride. The "Parnellism and Crime" Commission is in full swing. Sims Reeves intends to retire. High dresses may now be worn at Court functions. John Bright dies. The Mikado has prohibited roller-skating. M. Ysayë, the young Belgian violinist, makes his début at the Philharmonic "in no less arduous a test than Beethoven's Violin Concerto." New York's first execution by electricity will take place at the end of June. Mrs Maybrick is on trial for poisoning her husband. The Queen "longs to see the conversion of every reputable woman in the East End into an independent missionary of

morality, working quietly in her own sphere to create a force of public opinion against vice and its followers." (This is in answer to a petition from 5000 women of Whitechapel praying the Queen to abolish disorderly houses.) Miss Agnes Weston comforts the bluejackets. Between Henry James and the novel-reader who seeks "entertainment in any ordinary sense of the word" the *Graphic* finds that a gulf is fixed. Berlioz's Funeral March for Hamlet is produced at the Crystal Palace: "There is an *ad libitum* part for a small park of artillery, which the Crystal Palace conductor flatly refused to employ, while the substitute prepared obstinately refused to go off."

August 25 Some weeks ago I wrote Hart and Rodgers, *Wednesday.* the composers of the score for the American musical comedy *Babes in Arms*, to tell them of my complete enchantment, and regretting that there were no gramophone records of the fascinating number called "Imagine." This morning a parcel arrives containing a record of this tune they have had made specially for me. I regard this as a charming courtesy and wholly American. I can't imagine Englishmen going to anything like this trouble.

August 30 Sat up to listen to the postponed flight, which *Monday.* sounded like Louis's all the way. It's no good Farr or anybody else sending over "wicked rights" unless wickedness is backed by wallop. Farr just hasn't enough punch and that's the end of it.

August 31 History repeats itself. Ten years ago a young *Tuesday.* Scot called Alan Dent walked into my house saying he was a better dramatic critic than me. This morning a young Irishman calling himself Julian Glen Conders did the same thing. Nineteen, fatherless, reeking of Dublin. Produced a perfectly typed and admirably tempered notice of Beverley Nichols' *Floodlight*.

To guard against being taken in by a flash-in-the-pan effort have sent the boy to Jack Priestley's play. He is to

see it this afternoon and produce a thousand-word 'impression' to-morrow morning. If this is good I shall start to pull strings at once.

Sept. 2 My young Irishman is turning up trumps.
Thursday. Either through honesty or contrivance—and either is remarkable—he flatly contradicts all I wrote about the Priestley play. Here are some of his thousand words punctually submitted this morning :

Neither wit nor poet, Priestley writes with both feet solidly planted on the ground, and among dramatists similarly glued he has no living superior. Unfortunately, in common with so many people set smoothly and happily in one especial class, Priestley is beset at irregular periods by the yearning to step out of his natural groove. It is not enough for him to be one of the most diverting of local authors—he must display himself as a subtle thinker, a fellow of fantastic and faintly beautiful ideas. This posturing, of course, is not done seriously—I would not do Priestley the unkindness to suggest that he fancies his occasional lapses into mooniness are intellectual acrobatics of spectacular value—but is arranged shrewdly to tickle the ordinary theatre public. Priestly realises, as Robert E. Sherwood in America has also realised, that nothing more delights the average modern occupant of the dress circle than the inclusion in his evening's entertainment of a little philosophic dithering, the vaguer and less relevant to the accompanying play the better. Such high-flown drool gratifies the aforementioned A.M.O. of the D.C. with the flattering notion that he is revelling in regions of advanced thought, and later gratifies the author of the drool with pleasant tidings from the box office. So, in *Time and the Conways*, an otherwise superb piece of writing is diluted by the intrusion at intervals of some pretentious gabble about Time. Obviously having read Dunne with interest, Priestley does his best to destroy a considerable achievement by forcing certain of his characters to talk sombrely about the old scythe-slinger in much the manner of Coward's "Time makes a mess of things, oh, what a mess of things Time makes." Blake is helpfully quoted, and the literary daughter of the Conway

family indulges in the sort of prophetic trances one had thought long ago laid gracefully away in catacombs inviolable.

I apologise to J.B.P. for the foregoing, which is not at all my view of his play. But he can afford to be magnanimous, and can't the boy write! At nineteen one ought to be wrong about everything: the point is to be brilliantly and not flatly wrong.

Sept. 8 The miracle has happened. R. J. Minney, the editor *Friday.* of the *Sunday Referee*, has given my young Irishman a job as junior reporter at £2 a week!

Sept. 6 The boy writes:
Monday.

2 *Emperor's Gate, S.W.*
Sunday, Sept. 5th, '87

DEAR MR AGATE,

The above extravagant address is true for the moment, at least. I couldn't resist the opulent letter-heading; another manifestation of the tinsel streak I am so fond of finding in my otherwise unblemished greatness. Besides, it's only right that the Splendeurs should precede the Misères.

Thank you ever so much for all your kindness. I hope I shan't be a disappointment to you; needless to say, I don't for an instant suppose I shall!

I saw Mr Drawbell of the *Sunday Chronicle* on Saturday. He told me to come to him if anything "misfires" with the *Referee* job. Since then I have been frightfully busy without accomplishing anything worth mentioning.

I'll write again in a fortnight; in the meantime *Ego* interferes grievously with my sleeping hours.

Sincerely,
JULIAN GLEN CONDERS

And now I don't want to see or hear any more of this young man for a bit.

Sept. 7 Behaved badly last night. Went to *Richard II*
Tuesday. and, becoming bored, came away after the second act.

Sept. 8 *Bonnet over the Windmill* at New Theatre.
Wednesday. Endless and rather silly play by Dodie Smith
 about a young woman who tries to turn her-
 self into a good actress and a young man into a good play-
 wright by spending the night with him in a windmill.

Sept. 9 Sixty to-day. Asked Leo what he did on the
Thursday. same occasion. He said, "Stayed indoors and
 read the Book of Job." Had a very good day,
 if not quite so austere. Luncheon party at the Ivy. Guests
 were Marie Tempest, Gladys Calthrop, my sister May, Hugh
 Walpole, Harold Dearden, Hamish Hamilton, and Jock.
 Mary was looking ridiculously young, Gladys magnificently
 apache-like with a scarf printed like a newspaper, May quiet
 and mouse-like, Hugh pink and flourishing, Dearden macabre
 and genial, the result of Irvingesque eyebrows beetling over a
 bright blue hunting-stock, Hamish composed and self-effacing,
 Jock plump after his French, Dutch, and German holiday
 and obviously bursting with travel secrets. Sibelius Concert
 at Queen's Hall, including my favourite second symphony,
 and the sixth, which I find bleak. Left at half-time and
 looked in at the Queen's Theatre for the last act of Gielgud's
Richard, conscience having pricked me. Rather boisterous
 supper-party at home. My presents included a drawing by
 Gladys Calthrop which was part of the décor for Noel's pro-
 duction of *Mademoiselle*. This shows a pink stallion prancing
 before a white ditto and trailing a black tail like the train
 to a court frock. The setting is half ancient Greece and half
 peppermint rock, and the whole is in the manner of Chirico,
 and may even be a copy. Gladys gave me this, and it is so
 large in its white frame that I shall have to take a new flat!

Sept. 10 Came across this in Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio*
Friday. *Medici*: "I can look a whole day with delight upon
 a handsome Picture, though it be but of an Horse."

Sept. 12 Made a jaunt to Canterbury. I asked a verger if
Sunday. Becket was buried in the Cathedral. He replied,
 "He was. But in Henry the Eighth's time they

dug the swine up and scattered the bones outside." I went away making a note of this extraordinary utterance.

Sept. 18 Jock back at work. He has fallen in love with *Monday*. Paris in general, and with an anonymous Old Master's picture of Gabrielle d'Estrées and the Duchesse de Villars in particular.

Sept. 14 Walked out of *Crazy Days* at the Shaftesbury. Is *Tuesday*. a critic ever justified in doing this? Shaw confesses to having done it, and I saw Walkley do it. But I think they were wrong, and that I am. I hold that the modern critic should imitate the poet Martial, who declined to leave the arena when the bear began to eat the slave alive: "These are my times. I must see them. I want to know my times."

Sept. 15 Got up at half-past five and motored to *Wednesday*. Altrincham for the last show of the season. Ego off colour. Sonnet had a day out and got second. His record for the season is 7th, 6th, 5th, 4th, 3rd, and now 2nd. What a pity there isn't one more show. Got home about two! A long day.

Sept. 19 Edgar Jepson, a dapper little man who must be a *Sunday*. hundred and fifty, looks like a well-preserved thirty, and has a voice like unsweetened mint-sauce, has written a second book of memoirs which is even better than the first. Leo spent the day with me, and was enchanted when I read out the sentence, "Isidore Leo Pavia, the pupil of Leschetitzky, played Chopin better than all the others." In the same bundle for review was Shaw's *London Music* in 1888-1889 as *Heard by Corno di Bassetto*. I read Leo the passage about Essipoff, Leschetitzky's second wife. This runs:

That lady's terrible precision and unfailing nerve; her cold contempt for difficulties; her miraculous speed, free from any appearance of haste; her grace and finesse, without a touch of anything as weak as tenderness; all these are subjects for awe rather than for criticism. When she

played Chopin's waltz in A flat, it did not sound like Chopin: the ear could not follow the lightning play of her right hand. Yet she was not, like Rubinstein at that speed, excited and furious over it: she was cold as ice: one felt like Tartini on the celebrated occasion when he got the suggestion for his *Trillo del Diavolo*. Additional impressiveness was given to the performance by the fact that Madame Essipoff had no platform mannerisms or affectations. When the applause reached the point at which an encore was inevitable, she walked to the piano-forte without wasting a second; shot at the audience, without a note of prelude, an exercise about 40 seconds long, and of satanic difficulty; and vanished as calmly as she had appeared. Truly an astonishing—almost a fearful player.

Leo said, "That's very well done. Essipoff used to give me my lesson when Leschetitzky was away on holiday. She was a hard, horrible, emotionless woman who never smiled and never praised. She was also a nymphomaniac; her husband, coming home unexpectedly, found her in bed with two pupils. He kicked her out and married the Countess Donamirska, who became his third wife. Leschetitzky had four wives in all. He was undersized, immensely vigorous sexually, and a brute, though on occasion generous."

We also talked about Ion Swinley, who died last week at the age of forty-five. Swinley was very nearly a great Shakespearean actor, and it is tragic that his early promise was never quite fulfilled. He had everything a romantic player should possess—looks, presence, and a noble, resonant voice. The one thing lacking was a command of facial expression, Swinley's cast of features exhibiting an unchanging melancholy, the only alternative being a kind of rueful alertness. This, I think, is why he failed in the bigger Shakespearean parts. On the other hand, the genuineness of this mood, for it became a settled mood, served him admirably in Russian plays. His best part, in my opinion, was Ver-shinin in *The Three Sisters*, though there was a beautiful, tender severity about his Button-Moulder. And he was always the actor to play any Brother Karamazov. A greater

disability than lack of variety was to be found in his defective memory, which would fail him not only on first nights, but in the middle of a run. In spite of these handicaps Swinley, over a wide range of parts, was the best Shakespearean actor since the War. Gielgud could have afforded to play against him, but only just: he would have made, and did make, a mess of all the modern lispers of blank verse. Possibly a contributory reason for failure—for it was failure—was to be found in his modesty, his lack of push and self-advertisement, and his extraordinary preoccupation with his part. For many years I used to meet Swinley at Sunday luncheon-time at the Savage Club, though he never ate any lunch. Only once have I seen him sit at a table and eat a meal. He was always immersed in some book fantastically opposite to the sort of thing which makes for popularity in actors. He was a poet as well as a player, and intensely interested in the speaking of verse, which he did beautifully. As an actor he was generous-minded and easy to play with. He could not wear modern dress, but costume became him perfectly. He was shy and almost morbidly sensitive, and one guessed him to be unhappy. He made no complaint of his health or anything else, and about him always there was an air of unassuming nobility. Cheapness and commonness of thought could not live in Ion's presence. He thought nobly of the actor, and pursued the art of acting to the uttermost of body and spirit. There is a scale of values in which he was one of the most successful players of our time.

Leo recalled an evening just after the War when Swinley recited great wads of Shelley, and Leo improvised a piano accompaniment, while George Bealby, with his eyeglass fixed in his eye, as always, lay on the sofa and contemplated the ceiling. "It was a night," said Leo, "of some inspiration and much whisky!"

Sept. 22 Concerning stars.

Wednesday. From Mount Wilson, California:

Light from an explosion that occurred 7,000,000 years



By permission of the French Government

Lois Favourite Picture

ago and 42,000,000,000,000,000 miles away has just been observed by astronomers at Mount Wilson, California. The star was seen in the constellation of Perseus and is the result of an explosion that created a glare 500,000,000 times brighter than the sun.

From Denham, England :

The film-actor chosen as 'stand-in' to Robert Taylor is an ex-mattress-hand in a bedding factory.

Sept. 28 Lunched with Reggie Pound and heard all about
Thursday. a friend of his, formerly an Intelligence officer,
 who every morning stands on his head in his bedroom for three-quarters of an hour in order to get in touch with the Fourth Dimension.

Sept. 24 A letter from my Irishman :
Friday.

2 Emperor's Gate, S.W.7

September 22, 1987

DEAR MR AGATE,

A whole fortnight has whirled away without anyone discovering my magnificent incompetence as a reporter—or, rather, without anyone doing anything about it. I am still in receipt of a lordly emolument in return for which I diligently scour all available papers for morsels of information likely to entrance the wanton housewife and her phlegmatic husband, and at intervals rush wildly to all points of the compass in search of platitude.

Also, I do an inordinate amount of telephoning, and sometimes part of my work actually achieves print and is doubtless perused with breathless eyes by my 400,000 readers. Last Sunday I counted no fewer than three items that evidenced the hand of the master, and any week now I may expect to see a complete sentence of my own contriving published in all its virgin beauty.

In the bus to-night I sat next to a woman who read *Ego* intently for twenty minutes, like Wordsworth's cattle, without raising her head.

Sincerely,

JULIAN GLEN CONDERS

My Dreyfus play is to be exhumed again! Have signed contract with Jack De Leon, who is to put it on at the "Q" Theatre on October 25th. Campbell Gullan produces, and we are now looking round for a cast.

Oct. 1 Called on Maurice Healy, whom I was taking out *Friday*. to dinner in return for a gorgeous spread he gave me last Sunday, when I met Boyd Neel the conductor, and a political bloke named Captain Macnamara, to whom the Duchess of Atholl telephoned for twenty-five minutes. (I felt almost as important as if she had been telephoning to me.) Maurice lives in an atmosphere of books, gramophone records, vintage clarets, wit, and full-bodied, Rabelaisian talk. When I arrived Henry Wood on the air was in the middle of an enthusiastic performance of the Ninth Symphony. So I sat down and listened while Maurice poured out sherry and prowled cat-like about the room, pausing in the middle of the slow movement to say with extraordinary vehemence: "The *grovelling beasts* call Brahms' Number One Beethoven's Tenth!" At the Écu de France, Maurice saying I was right in thinking that to-day nobody knows anything about the Dreyfus case, I asked him whether I should be justified in giving a précis of it here. He said, "A good intaglio never hurt a good book." So here goes.

INTAGLIO

The crime which we know as the "Affaire Dreyfus" was brought about by the lack of virtue in General Mercier; it was redeemed by the steadfastness of a single man, that man being Colonel Picquart. General Mercier was appointed Minister for War at the end of 1898. He was a spare, dry man, and, on paper, a good soldier. All went well with Mercier until the "Turpin affair." Turpin professed to be the inventor of melinite, and, deeming himself insufficiently rewarded with a quarter of a million francs, became a spy and was condemned to five years' imprisonment. His sentence remitted, he announced another discovery of the highest importance made during his imprisonment. Mercier

would have nothing to do with this, founding his rejection on his 'artillery flair.' Some men have been made by a phrase, others unmade. Mercier's 'flair d'artilleur' bore a threatening likeness to Ollivier's 'cœur léger.' The public interested itself in Turpin, and the matter was debated in the Chamber; Mercier, presupposing that Turpin would be put forward as a patriot, prepared a defence based on the destruction of that legend. But his opponents were before him. Turpin was admitted to be a scoundrel who ought to be shot. But even a scoundrel may be an inventive genius. Was it not treachery in any Minister to turn down an invention without looking into it and on the mere strength of his 'artillery flair'? It was touch-and-go with Mercier, and from that moment he was tortured by the need for rehabilitation.

The debate in the Chamber took place in May 1894, and, the matter of national defence once raised, national susceptibility was at the flood. The public had vaguely heard, and the War Office knew, that information concerning French military matters was being regularly supplied to the Germans. It was known that espionage was being practised by the German Military Attaché, von Schwarzkoppen, and his Italian colleague, Count Panizzardi. Against the pair the French set up counter-espionage, a system which supplied false information through pretended spies posing as real ones in the German employ. At the same time the French bought the services of Mme Bastian, a charwoman in Schwarzkoppen's employ, who every morning delivered the contents of his wastepaper-basket to Colonel Henry, the underling of Colonel Sandherr, chief of the French Intelligence Service. In September Henry produced a remarkable document, afterwards to be known all over the world as the "bordereau," said to have been found in Schwarzkoppen's wastepaper-basket. This document was a list of vitally important plans delivered to Schwarzkoppen by some French traitor. The French War Office could not doubt the correctness of the list, since the information supplied was exact. But it did not occur to Sandherr to ask why Schwarzkoppen

had been such a fool as to consign such a letter, torn into four pieces only, into his wastepaper-basket, or to ask whether Schwarzkoppen had in fact received it. Even when, after Dreyfus's first trial, the German Emperor himself indignantly denied receipt by the All-Highest or his Army of any such information, and nearly went to war on the plea that the French had trumped up the Dreyfus affair to provoke trouble—even then it did not occur to Sandherr or Mercier to question Henry's honesty and what might be behind it, or who behind him. To excuse this negligence Sandherr might have pleaded the creeping paralysis of which he was shortly to die; Mercier's mind was elsewhere. The news of Henry's discovery must leak out. If Mercier could not find the traitor he was lost, since the Minister for War is responsible for the safe-keeping of War Office secrets. If Mercier could find the traitor he would within six months have recovered from the set-back over the Turpin affair. A culprit had to be found at all costs. Sandherr, knowing how the land lay with Mercier, began to nose through the Army list of young officers. Stopping at the name "Dreyfus," he saw a chance of killing three birds with one stone—quieting the public nerves, helping his superior, and glutting that anti-Semitism which in him was a passion amounting to delirium. For Dreyfus was a Jew!

Never since Justice first held court has Reason allowed such logic as was now adduced to pass unchallenged. From the nature of the bordereau the traitor could only be an artilleryman who was also a probationer on the General Staff. Dreyfus was both. He was also a Jew. He must be the traitor! But the bordereau ended, "*I am now going on manœuvres.*" In a frenzy of eagerness confirmation was sought that Dreyfus had gone on manœuvres. No! But underlings have their subordinates, and what Sandherr was to Mercier, one D'Abboville was to Sandherr. And D'Abboville proved that at some other date Dreyfus had been on a staff tour! Mercier, Sandherr, D'Abboville, the War Office—everybody was content to ignore the fact that the information of the bordereau could not have been obtained on a

staff tour. At once they procured examples of Dreyfus's handwriting and submitted them, with the bordereau, to one Gobert, handwriting expert to the Bank of France. Were they the same? "No!" said Gobert, with finality. Whereupon they produced Bertillon, and because of his famous father took his assurance that the handwriting *was* the same. On the principle of confronting a supposed murderer with the body they sent for Dreyfus and made him write from dictation part of the contents of the bordereau. At first Dreyfus wrote a little shakily, for it was a bitterly cold October day, and Dreyfus explained that his fingers were numb. As he proceeded to take down the progressively incriminating material which, if he had been guilty, must have made him more nervous, his handwriting and manner became firmer. The test was serving no purpose, and so the preliminary farce might as well come to an end. The Chief of Police was present. Commandant du Paty de Clam, Marquis, dabbler in æsthetics, occultism, and the pleasanter infamies, uttered the words which now rang up the curtain on the great Affaire: "Captain Dreyfus, I arrest you on the charge of high treason!" The Chief of Police hurried away to the prison of Cherche-Midi a man who in every aspect save moral courage was unfitted for the heroic rôle. Alfred Dreyfus was an Alsatian of thirty-five with a most unromantic exterior. His manners were clumsy, his voice was harsh, and his whole person was without any quality of charm. He was semi-bald and round-shouldered, and his eyes behind their glasses had the fish-like quality of the confirmed bookworm. As the gates of Cherche-Midi closed on their prisoner, General Mercier, Minister for War, knew that he was by that fact a popular hero. Yet how near a thing it had been! For from the day of the arrest of Dreyfus to that of his trial the slogan invented by Paul de Cassagnac resounded all over Paris and throughout France: "If Dreyfus is acquitted Mercier goes!" Mercier did not go, but his career was over. Offering himself at the next presidential election, he was defeated. Félix Faure was elected, and Mercier's post was given to another.

On December 19, 1894, the first Dreyfus trial began. It concluded three days later, two of which had gone immensely in favour of the accused. Realising that the prosecution must fail, Mercier promptly dispatched Colonel Henry to the Intelligence Archives to look for something more incriminating. General Boisdeffre, the Chief of the General Staff, had hinted to Mercier that the Archives might be helpful, after which Boisdeffre went off to Russia to help to bury the dead Tsar! Henry returned with a document incriminating a known spy called "D." Now Henry was an expert forger, and by the addition of a date and a few supplementary details "D" could be made to stand for Dreyfus. Armed with this and a dozen minor forgeries, Mercier, on the third day of the trial, had a private interview with the president of the court-martial, and imposed upon him the moral obligation to lay this evidence before the judges *privately*. It was not to be shown to the defence "for fear of international complications." The president, taking for granted, as every single-minded, stupid soldier must, the good faith of his superior officer, did as he was told; and the simpletons who were Dreyfus's judges un-animously found him guilty. He was condemned to solitary imprisonment for life.

But first the degradation, which takes place in the courtyard of the École de Guerre. Nine o'clock on a bitterly cold morning, with the snow just beginning to fall. Inside the square troops stand motionless and silent. Outside and pressed against the gates is the deadly quiet mob. Now Dreyfus is led forth. He is completely self-possessed, and when the officer who strips him has difficulty with an epaulette Dreyfus helps him. Can guilt wear this face? one or two ask. If this is not innocence, what an actor perishes here! say others. Now the Alsatian marches round the square, proclaiming his innocence. To the crowd, which has begun to howl and demand the guillotine, he cries, "*I am innocent! Vive la France!*" And, coming to the place where the cadets stand, he cries, "*You behold a martyr!*" Between guards, but with the proud step of an

officer at the head of his men, Dreyfus marches to the waiting prison van, and thus begins the long journey which is to end at Devil's Island.

Next day opinions are strangely divided. One journalist writes that in the degraded prisoner the man ceases to exist. He is neither pale nor flushed, "just traitor-coloured." But impartial observation is not Léon Daudet's forte. Another journalist complains—and here the questioning note is first sounded—that "Judas marched too well." Things have not quite gone according to plan. Dreyfus has refused to shoot himself, to plead guilty, even to look guilty. But on Devil's Island he will be welcome to his air of martyrdom and as much innocence as he can impose upon the sharks and warders. For four years French Guiana swallows up this "hardened criminal." For four years he lives in a wooden hut surrounded by a palisade. Between the hut and the palisade there is fifteen inches in which he can walk. But he cannot behold land or sea, only a few square yards of pitiless sky. At night he is put in irons, which cause sores. The sores are dressed every morning, and every evening the irons are put on again. Through want of air his breathing becomes affected, so they raise the floor a few inches without lowering the palisades. He is guarded night and day, and to sleep may not have the comfort of the dark. Heat, flies, filth, fever. He begins to lose sight and hearing. Solitary confinement does its work, and his suffering is such that at times he loses all but the sense of suffering.

At home public confidence in the preservation of military secrets has been restored. The German Emperor has grown a little older and does not prance quite so noisily or in quite such full armour up and down the frontier. Other countries have forgotten the Dreyfus case. Why should not France forget Dreyfus? France does forget Dreyfus. All is well. If only Mathieu Dreyfus, Alfred's brother, would let the matter rest! If only Félix Faure, France's new President, had not learned of Mercier's machinations at the court-martial, including Henry's forgeries, and whispered his knowledge to a friend of Mathieu! If only Colonel

Picquart had not been a man of absolute and uncompromising honesty ! The last was the snag in the way of the falsest security in which a great nation has ever indulged. Colonel Sandherr, Chief of the Intelligence Department, had crept in company with his paralysis into retirement. That dishonest boor who was Colonel Henry had been overlooked as successor to Sandherr, Picquart being chosen in his stead. Now Picquart was, if anything, anti-Dreyfus, not because he disapproved of Dreyfus being a Jew, but because he genuinely believed Dreyfus to be guilty.

Then, on an appropriately fine morning, Mme Bastian, Schwarzkoppen's charwoman, brought to the Intelligence Department her usual gleanings from the wastepaper-basket of her employer, the German Military Attaché. These gleanings were fifty in number, which, being put together, turned out to be a letter written by Schwarzkoppen, who had afterwards changed his mind about sending it to an individual who now makes his bow as chief material villain in this extraordinary piece, the palm for spiritual dishonour having been already awarded to Mercier. The individual to whom Schwarzkoppen's letter was addressed was Count Ferdinand Walsin Esterhazy, a major in the French Army. Esterhazy was a middle-aged adventurer claiming vague descent from the noble Hungarian family of that name. He was known to be a spendthrift and a wastrel, and the proprietor of an establishment uncommonly like a brothel. Picquart at once asked himself in what connection other than espionage could the German Military Attaché possibly write to a French major known to be hopelessly in debt. And for some months he turned the matter over in his mind.

Then the *Matin* published a facsimile of the bordereau alleged to be in Dreyfus's handwriting, which caused a certain banker to bring to Mathieu Dreyfus a letter written to him by a debtor who was a major of the name of Esterhazy. The debtor's handwriting was the same as that of the bordereau ! Mathieu, believing that this convicted Esterhazy of his brother's crime, went hot foot to Picquart, who al-

ready had proof that Esterhazy was a spy. But was he *the* spy? Might he not be in Schwarzkoppen's pay without having written the bordereau? Yet there was the damning evidence of the handwriting, and, besides, Picquart had discovered that Esterhazy and Henry were friends of twenty years' standing. If the crime could be fastened on Dreyfus and still pinned there, no harm could come to Henry's friend Esterhazy. The War Office, where General Boisdeffre was now the chief power, insisted upon trying Esterhazy on the single charge of being in enemy pay. That dreadfully dangerous dog which was the Dreyfus case must be left to sleep. Picquart, beginning to have grave doubts as to Dreyfus's guilt, would not hear of this. He drew a picture of an innocent man rotting on Devil's Island, only to be told that the rotting of an innocent man was nothing in comparison with the impugning of military honour which must take place if the Dreyfus verdict was interfered with. Picquart failed to agree, and so was relieved of his job and sent to the most dangerous post in Tunis with the blessings of his superiors and their prayers that an Arab bullet would put an end to his punctiliousness and truthmongering! Once more everything sleeps. Dreyfus is safe in his torrid cell, alone with that silence which for all he knows will never be broken. An empty year passes, for, with Picquart out of the way, the War Office sees no compelling necessity to proceed farther with the case against Esterhazy.

Suddenly Mathieu, backed by the moral support of one Scheurer-Kestner, a vice-president of the Senate and as old and blameless as Priam, openly denounced Esterhazy as the author of the bordereau. Horrified at this spectacular release of the War Office cat out of the infamous bag, Ministers arranged to put Esterhazy on immediate trial, but with orders to the prosecution to attack nobody except Picquart. Esterhazy gave a great deal of flamboyant evidence in his own favour, including a theatrical story of a Veiled Lady who used to meet him in the street at midnight and out of a cab-window hand him documents showing how Picquart was trying to incriminate him. Picquart, recalled from Tunis,

ostensibly as a witness against Esterhazy, was forced to give evidence *in camera*. Esterhazy was, of course, acquitted, and Picquart, for his pains, was thrown into a fortress. But the trial had not pleased Georges Clemenceau, the editor of *L'Aurore*. During the trial he had asked whether actually it was not Picquart rather than Esterhazy who was in the dock. Two days after Esterhazy's acquittal there appeared an eight-column article in *L'Aurore*. For days nothing was talked of except this article, which, flaming in the forehead of the morning sky, went round the world. It was in the form of a letter to the President of the French Republic. It was signed "Émile Zola." It bore the title "*J'Accuse*. . . !"

I accuse Lieut.-Colonel du Paty de Clam of having been the author of a judicial error—unconsciously, I am ready to believe—and of having for three years bolstered up this error with manifest and palpable inventions.

I accuse General Mercier of one of the greatest crimes of the century.

I accuse General de Boisdeffre of complicity in the same crime. I accuse him of bigotry and that crass obstinacy which makes men of his profession regard their War Office as a sacred, inviolable ark.

I accuse the Minister for War of suppressing proofs of the innocence of Captain Dreyfus. I accuse him also of *lèse-justice* and *lèse-humanité*.

I accuse the War Office of having organised in the Press an abominable campaign of deception.

Finally, I accuse the court-martial which tried Captain Dreyfus of having violated French law by condemning an accused man on a document not divulged to him; and I accuse the Esterhazy court-martial of having, to order, screened that illegality by committing in its turn the judicial crime of knowingly acquitting a guilty man.

The result of Zola's article in *L'Aurore* was that he and the editor were prosecuted for defaming the Paris court-martial. Zola left his case in the hands of his counsel, Maître Labori, of Jaurès, the Socialist leader, and of Clemenceau, his friend, and proprietor of *L'Aurore*. Jaurès said, "Zola is hated and persecuted, and I will tell you

why. We hate and persecute in Zola the man who interpreted rationally and scientifically the miracles at Lourdes; we hate and persecute in him the man who in *Germinal* announced the dawn of the new humanity, the rising of the miserable proletariat from the depths of suffering into the sunlight; we hate and persecute in him the challenger of that dangerous irresponsibility under cover of which the General Staff is laying up disaster for us all. But this I know—that I am one with all right-thinking citizens when I say that before Zola I bend my knee! ”

Clemenceau said, “Many Frenchmen say: ‘It is possible that Dreyfus was condemned irregularly, but he was condemned justly.’ This is the sophistry of the *raison d’état*. Every Fourteenth of July we dance on the ruins of the Bastille. But we have preserved this other Bastille—the *raison d’état*. It is painful to find oneself in conflict with soldiers who think they are doing their duty. But it happens to every one to mean well and to blunder. It happens to civilians without the uniform, and to the civilians in uniform who are our soldiers. Gentlemen, make it known in the name of the French people that France has justice even for the Jews! Nip in the bud this beginning of a religious war. Say to this religious war: This shall not be! We appear before you, gentlemen of the jury. You appear before history! ”

Throughout, the court had refused to allow the defence to bring any evidence which might tend to reopen the original Dreyfus case. But the prosecution did not feel too sure, and once more turned to Colonel Henry, that universal cat’s-paw. Henry, called to the witness-box, hinted to the jury the existence not only of secret documents, but of what to-day would be called ‘super-secret’ documents. The jury asked for particulars. What could Henry tell? Henry became super-mysterious, shook his head, and, Hamlet-like, hinted that “he could an if he would.” But for the moment he wouldn’t. A few days later a crony of Henry’s, speaking at a political meeting, revealed that a marginal note had been added to the famous bordereau, written by the German

Emperor himself in his own handwriting, in which the All-Highest acknowledged Dreyfus as an accredited German agent! It further appeared that the French Secret Service had been clever enough to get a photograph of this document!! In case this should not be enough, another general, one Pélleux, was now produced, to swear that since the Dreyfus trial he had encountered still more convincing proof of the Jew's guilt. This was a letter which the Italian Military Attaché, Panizzardi, had sent to his German colleague, Schwarzkoppen, to the effect that in view of international complications neither should let his Government know about the employment of Dreyfus. Whereupon Maître Labori began to cogitate. If this letter was genuine and the writer and recipient had kept quiet about Dreyfus, how came the German Emperor to be in a position to make chattersome notes about Dreyfus on the bordereau? Labori demanded that the letter should be produced. General Pélleux demanded the presence of General de Boisdeffre. Boisdeffre arrived bearing the letter.

And then the conspirators lost their nerve. The presiding judge was called out of the room, and when he returned he adjourned the court. The letter in question was never produced. Ultimately both defendants were found guilty. Zola was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and the editor of *L'Aurore* to four months' imprisonment. Each was fined 8000 francs. The result of the trial shocked the rest of Europe, which had previously taken up towards the Dreyfus affair an attitude compounded of boredom and diplomatic indifference to another nation's domestic troubles. The French Chamber was fully alive to the growing uneasiness in other countries as to the conduct of the Dreyfus and these other cases. According to a political system whereby nobody could be Minister for War for more than two minutes together, a new Minister had been chosen, one Cavaignac. Amid general enthusiasm Cavaignac now, from the tribune of the Chamber, read out that letter from Panizzardi to Schwarzkoppen whose existence Pélleux had revealed and which Boisdeffre had been willing to produce in court. At

once Picquart, who had been released from his fortress, denounced the letter as a forgery, for which he was again incarcerated!

Once more everything sleeps. Dreyfus safe on Devil's Island, Esterhazy whitewashed, Mathieu Dreyfus routed, Picquart in prison, and Zola under sentence, and, better still, out of the way in England, whither he has fled pending appeal. Even the newspapers show that lessening interest which denotes the end. The *Figaro* says boldly: "The Affaire is buried." To the Chamber the time seems apt for a gesture. That gesture is the publication on the wall of every town-hall in France, every village *mairie*, of Cavaignac's speech from the tribune. To Dreyfus the belief that France, having condemned him, had also forgotten him must have been better than the knowledge of this universal blazoning of his supposed guilt. But it is always darkest before the dawn, and the first trickle of the light that was afterwards to be let into the whole business came through the action of a civil judge, one Bertulus. Here we must return to Picquart and his exile in Tunis. When there Picquart received a number of telegrams which he believed to be forged, and it was to M. Bertulus that he entrusted the job of tracking down the forger. It occurred to this little judge of the civil power to suspect Esterhazy. Searching Esterhazy's flat, he there found documents which at once made him suspect that Esterhazy was the author of the crime for which Dreyfus had been sentenced! He had the Hungarian arrested, and, the war between Bertulus and Esterhazy's powerful protectors undergoing swaying fortunes, for some weeks Esterhazy was alternately in and out of prison. The little judge next cast his net round Colonel Henry, at whom he fired point-blank the statement that Esterhazy was the author of the bordereau. Henry, who seems to have been that contemptible thing the criminal without resource, admitted his friend's guilt, after which he judged it prudent to go on leave. But Esterhazy was not to be unavenged for long. At this point enter Captain Cuignet, a friend of Cavaignac, and entrusted by him with

the task, popular in the French War Ministry any time during those four years, of reclassifying the documents in the Dreyfus case. At last Cuignet came to the original of that letter which Cavaignac had spouted to the Chamber, and a copy of which was still shouting from the wall of every *mairie* in France. Holding the original up to the light, Cuignet discovered that it was made out of two different kinds of paper. Only the superscription and the signature were genuine; the whole of the contents pretending reference to Dreyfus was a forgery! Cavaignac knew that if the letter was a forgery his wretched placarding of the *mairies* must mean his downfall. But he did not hesitate. He sent for Henry, and, taxing him with the forgery, had him arrested and conveyed to the fortress of Mont Valérien. Next day Henry was found in his cell with his throat cut. Henry alive and confessing to wholesale forgery was something for which the Ministry for War would not willingly have bargained, and his sudden death was, to say the least of it, extraordinarily well timed. Picquart said to those who brought him the news of the tragedy: "Gentlemen, if tomorrow I am found dead in my cell, I warn you that it will not be suicide!"

To see light through the trees is not by any means to be out of the wood. Dreyfus was still on Devil's Island, and nobody seemed to be in any particular hurry to get him off it. Forgers might come and forgers might go, but their detection did nothing to dam the stream of one poor devil's torment. It had become a joke against Zola that in his crusade for Liberty he entirely forgot the poor fellow to be liberated. To the Dreyfus family it all seemed so simple. Alfred had done no wrong. Why should not Alfred be liberated? But France saw the matter otherwise. The question was not: Is Dreyfus guilty or innocent? The question was: Are you anti-Dreyfus, or pro-Dreyfus? To be anti-Dreyfus meant that though you believed him to be innocent you wanted the punishment to stand because he was a Jew and you were an anti-Semite. To be pro-Dreyfus meant that because Dreyfus was a Jew and because your

sympathies were pro-Jewish you desired his release even though he were ten times guilty. In these circumstances it did not enter into the head of Authority to reopen the question as to whether the handwriting on the bordereau was or was not that of Dreyfus. By this time the conviction was fairly general that Esterhazy and not Dreyfus was the real traitor. Esterhazy had been dismissed from the Army, which was a convenient way of getting rid of a man who had only to open his mouth to make no end of trouble. Still there was no movement for either the release of Dreyfus or the reopening of his trial. Instead the Minister for War chose with pointed infelicity to prefer a charge of forgery against, of all people, Picquart! Abroad France was losing all sympathy, so much so that in the various European capitals the French Embassies had to be guarded by troops. Other nations, whose eyes were not blinded by the mists of prejudice and passion, saw that all the evidence at the original trial had been a great deal too thin. The outside world was weary of the *Affaire* and would have welcomed Dreyfus's release and rehabilitation and applauded France for a courageous act. But France, whose army was always its idol, still feared the blow to that idol's prestige which would be occasioned by the admission that from the very start the Army had been in the wrong. To retrace the last ramifications of the struggle would be to rewrite one of the most troubled pages in the political history of France, a page thick with the names of Faure, Loubet, Waldeck-Rousseau, Gallifet, and many others. At the last the *Figaro* came forward with a claim for revision, and ultimately the civil court took a hand. On June 3, 1899, the Criminal Bench of the Cour de Cassation quashed the verdict against Dreyfus. But it was the wish of the family that Dreyfus, who had been condemned by his brother-officers, should be exonerated by them.

And so we arrive at the second court-martial, which began at Rennes on August 7, 1899. Not Dreyfus, but the ghost of the man who had been Dreyfus, set out from Devil's Island to appear once more before his judges.

Maître Labori, on the principle that attack is the best form of defence, conceived the notion of commenting upon the character of General Mercier. He was rewarded by being shot and wounded when out walking with Picquart close to the Gendarmerie at Rennes, where a double sentry should have been posted. By a curious mischance both sentries were absent, the would-be assassin escaped, neither sentry was so much as reprimanded, and the court refused to adjourn. By a majority verdict Dreyfus was found guilty, with extenuating circumstances, and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, but without banishment or degradation! Now Esterhazy delivered his most cynical blow. Fled to London, he sent for a representative of *Le Matin*, and confessed that he and not Dreyfus was the author of the bordereau! To make this confession the more piquant he added that the whole business had been at the instigation of Colonel Sandherr, the right hand of General Mercier. At this point Esterhazy disappears from the story before dying thirteen years later. Cynical to the last, he assumes the name of M. Jean de Voilement and spends the years at Harpenden, an English village, gardening!

Dreyfus was now at the end of his tether, or so his brother decided. On September 19, 1899, the Government offered a free pardon, which Dreyfus accepted without renouncing his claim to a verdict of "Not guilty." Yet another four years remained before his final vindication. During those years Zola died; Jaurès demanded yet another inquiry, this time into the authenticity of the bordereau fantastically alleged to have been initialled by the Kaiser; Dreyfus petitioned once more for a revision; and, lastly, Mercier admitted that the bordereau with marginal notes by the Kaiser had never existed!

On July 12, 1906, the Cour de Cassation declared Dreyfus innocent. But Paris, France, and the entire world was by this time sick to death of the Affaire, and the long-anticipated verdict had now hardly a news value. The date is a week later—to be exact, July 22, 1906. The scene is once more the courtyard of the École de Guerre. On the

very spot where twelve years earlier he stood for the ceremony of degradation Dreyfus now stands to receive the Cross of the Legion of Honour. Drums roll. The officer bestows the accolade and kisses Dreyfus on both cheeks. What has it all been about? A few wretched secrets sold to pay gambling debts. A man implicated to save the face of a superior. A forger called in to support that implication. From the windows of the *École de Guerre* General Picquart has looked on at the ceremony. He has done his duty, and in that quiet consciousness lives on. Two years after the rehabilitation Zola's remains are transferred to the Panthéon, the last resting-place of French heroes. During this ceremony, and while the Government representative is speaking, two shots ring out and Dreyfus is slightly wounded. Arrested, the man pleads that he is not a would-be assassin, that his shots are a political protest. He is acquitted.

Last scene. It is November 1929. Clemenceau is dying. Before the statesman's modest dwelling a carriage draws up. A frail old man descends. It is Dreyfus.

Oct. 2 During the week I saw Ross Williamson's play *Saturday*, about Gladstone. The trouble about Gladstone is that he was not one man but six. Somebody once called Oscar Wilde an "artist in attitudes"; Gladstone was an artist in *moral* attitudes. He convinced himself that he was that highly unconvincing thing—a Liberal. He meant what he said without saying what he meant. He ran with the hare, hunted with the hounds, and was capable of preaching against both. He called heaven to witness this, that, and the other thing, well knowing that the lightning so thunderously evoked was only party fireworks. He was fox and whipper-in. He was the runaway coach, the brake, and even the hill itself, while holding forth from the box-seat on the moral beauty of the landscape. He was an apostle and a humbug. He would have been a great archbishop, and his bitterest opponents always allowed that he was a magnificent actor. In Joxer Daly's words, "a darlin' man."

It is about time somebody speeded up English acting. The opening scene on the first night ran something like this :

Mrs G. William !

(William, behind his morning paper, peruses four columns of Disraeli's latest speech on British Imperialism.

Mrs G. William !

(William reads two columns of Lord Hartington on the same theme, after which he says :)

Mr G. My love ?

Mrs G. Lend me five pounds.

Mr G. If my memory serves me right . . . *(Pauses and reads the whole of the previous night's debate in the House of Lords, after which he continues)* you had ten pounds yesterday.

Mrs G. *(who has been stirring the fire and watering the flowers, and has obviously forgotten her request).* Who said anything about money ?

The pace hardly increased even when Mr G. had finished with the paper. There were pauses in which an Armenian could have been not only murdered, but subjected to unmentionable atrocities as well.

Received a charming letter from Helen Hayes :

Indeed I have read every golden word you have written of my "Victoria Regina." Your review of the London production gave me great though guilty pleasure. I was praying for Pamela's triumph, but I am glad you thought me better in the part.

But why does Helen address me as "Samuel Agate" ? How strict, in Raleigh's sense, is fame !

Oct. 4 Overheard in the Strand : "And then she died,
Monday. the clock came into our family, and hasn't lost a
bleeding second since."

Oct. 5 Jock telling me that Clifford Bax hold each and
Tuesday. every one of his plays to be an entire and per-
fect chrysolite, I sent him the following :

1937]

EGO 8

Socrates, not out	100
The Venetian, c. Brown, b. Morgan...	70
The Rose without a Thorn, run out ...	86
The Immortal Lady, h. Agate... ..	0
Midsummer Madness, l.h.w., b. Dukes ...	8
The House of Borgia, st. Walkley, b. V. Hugo	14
The King and Mistress Shore, c. and b. W. Shakespeare...	4
Inns. dec.	
Total (6 wks.)	282

Evening at Sorrento did not go in.

Oct. 6 The retort courteous :
Wednesday.

G2 Albany, W.1
October 18th, 1937

DEAR JAMES,

I was greatly amused by your score-card, although it does not represent the great match between Bax and the Critics' Eleven as I remember it. But what a rash fellow you are! Do you not yet know, you evergreen stripling, that any author could talk for a day and a night and a morrow about his woes?

Jock took me too seriously: perhaps he has not quite your sense of humour? I was exaggerating. When I wrote plays I endured wise men in silence if not gladly: now that I am out of the theatre, I like just now and again to cock a snook at the Olympians. Jock is a modest fellow and a first-rate (which means a careful and thoughtful) critic. Most dramatic critics (why shouldn't we call them Dritics, for short?) have seemed to me fantastically conceited; and the reason is, of course, that the giving of opinions goes to their heads. Only once, in the past, did I hit back; and when I next met the offender he was quite hurt and rueful. Fancy anybody having the impertinence to make mincemeat of a mincemeat-maker!

You don't seem to remember that Socrates retired hurt after having scored two performances, or that Jane Shore was injured so badly in cutting that Miss Price may be said to have batted as a substitute. I think *Borgia* is easily the best of my plays, but have you ever seen a famous

piece (say, *The Merchant* or *Twelfth Night*) badly miscast? And, if so, were you able to imagine what you and your colleagues would have said about it if it were brand-new? When I saw *Borgia*—in cold blood—that is to say, after the first night—I was not surprised by its notices: for I believe that it is impossible for even a Hazlitt or an Agate to see what a play is really like if he has to see it through a distorted production. This feat might—might, I say—be possible in a fellow-dramatist. I, for instance, could see the original beauty in Hastings Turner's *Punchinello*, although, of course, I had not read it before witnessing the production.

You have also forgotten that Mr Pepys batted for quite a long time. Now, in this ballad-opera you would find the best theatre-lyrics written for centuries; nor could I complain of its general reception. But what a drivelling nitwit was the dritic who objected because I had not drawn a full-length portrait of Samuel! Can dritics not think at all? You can't put a gallon into a pint-pot: and meanwhile, just you have a look at those lyrics, if you can find them under the dust of eleven years.

The batsmen were uneven in merit, but I should place them in this order: *Borgia*, *Venetian*, *The Rose*, *Socrates*, *Pepys*, *Midsummer Madness*, *Immortal Lady*, *Jane Shore*. *Richard the Third* cannot possibly be by Shakespeare. Why can't you see that, and then wake up to its crudity? *Jane Shore* was never much good, but she was better than she appeared. You have always underrated the *Immortal Lady* because (presumably) you did not stay for the last act.

What a joy it is to have left that Awful World! In the Pepys ballad-opera our comedian suddenly came out, one evening, with the brilliant line "Once aboard the lugger . . ." and of course he got his laugh. I tried in vain to show him that there can be Wrong Laughs.

Now, don't forget that the innings is closed or that you will always be welcome, and so will Jock, at the ex-dramatist's flat.

Yours ever,

C. B.

P.S. Here is my score-card in the match Bax v. Dritics:

Charles Morgan, obstructing field	...	...	24
Ivor Brown, playing ball twice	...	...	19
James Agate, st. Ego, b. Bax	...	...	34
W. A. Darlington, hit wkt., b. Bax	...	...	4
H. Farjeon, l.b.w. (n.), b. Bax	...	...	5
J. G. Bergel, c. and b. Bax	...	...	9
Alan Dent, not out	...	...	38
Stephen Williams, b. Bax	...	...	10
S. R. Littlewood, c. sub., b. Bax	...	...	0
Harris Deans, run out	...	...	0
Desmond MacCarthy, absent	...	...	0
Critical wides 28, n.b. 12	...	...	40
<hr/>			
178			

You will see that Bax won easily. He ought, perhaps, to have played his second eleven.

Oct. 9 A busy week. On Monday Campbell Gullan read *Saturday*. the Dreyfus play to the nucleus of a company with great effect. When I first handled the German original I had in mind George Bealby for Zola, Austin Trevor for Esterhazy, and George Zucco for Picquart. But Bealby, alas! is dead, Zucco is in Hollywood, and Trevor engaged elsewhere. Actors who are not in an engagement are filming, and it has been the devil of a job to get anybody. Two bits of luck, however. William Devlin, who has already played Clemenceau with magnificent effect, will take on Zola, and Clarke-Smith has promised to do Esterhazy.

Oct. 10 A conversation which is pure Alice-in-Wonder-Sunday. land: *

J.A. Fred, bring me the *Sunday Times*.

(Fred puts paper into J.A.'s hand.)

J.A. (*icily*). This is yesterday's *Times*.

FRED (*with maddening calm*). It's the *Sunday Times* for Saturday.

Oct 13 Somebody has sent me a copy of *L'Aurore* of
Wednesday. Jan. 13, 1898, containing Zola's "*J'Accuse!*"
 letter. Bought in the streets of Paris that
 evening and preserved ever since. Am having this framed
 for exhibition in the theatre. Have seen no rehearsals, and
 have no idea how the play is getting on.

Oct. 14 Jock, who has been lunching with Neville
Thursday. Cardus, tells me this story. Some time in 1910
 or thereabouts George Mair took Pavlova to
 supper at the Midland Hotel, Manchester, and afterwards
 showed her round the office of the *Manchester Guardian*,
 where she proceeded to dance a tarantella on his desk. This
 was interrupted by C. P. Scott coming in to see what the
 noise was about. The old martinet surveyed the shocking
 scene with beard bristling and eyes popping out of his head.
 Pavlova at once jumped down and threw her arms round C.P.,
 saying, "Oh, you sweet old man. I love your white 'airs!" I
 believe that Cardus and Jock made this up between them.
 But I can vouch for the supper part of the story, as I was in
 the Midland that night and saw them.

Oct. 16 Gave Jock a copy of Abel Hermant's *La*
Saturday. *Fameuse Comédienne* with the inscription:
 "Let both of us live a thousand years and we
 shall not produce a witty masterpiece like this."

Oct. 17 A good play-going week. In the Old Vic revival
Sunday. of *Measure for Measure* Marie Ney stirred up all
 my old hatred of Isabella. I suppose that as a
 critic of the play one ought to put this on one side, as Dr
 Johnson did when he wrote:

In Isabella there is something harsh, and something
 forced and far-fetched. But her indignation cannot be
 thought violent when we consider her not only as a virgin
 but as a nun.

And as Montague did when he wrote:

We are to think of Isabella as one of those great quiet souls who seem to make their own calm, like ships shedding oil in the midst of tempest and trouble. Then, when the mind is penetrated with the sense of that austere serenity, we are to see the contained spirit leap up in an instant to the full height and heat of tragic passion.

Tragic my eye! Isabella reminds me not of a ship, but of the conversation between Kipling's two Scotch engineers, one of whom asked, "What's her vergeenity to a lassie?" And the other replied, "The world and a'!" No! I feel about Isabella as Groucho Marx did about the brat whom somebody hated to see cross a crowded street—"I hate him anyway!" Whereas Claudio seems to me to be an entirely reasonable character. After all, he is not demanding the earth. He is not sending Isabella to live on Devil's Island, or asking her to read the novels of Mrs Humphry Ward. He is asking her to do something which Evelyn Waugh's Agatha Runcible would have been delighted to spend the rest of her life describing as, "My dear, quite too blush-making!" Both of Shakespeare's characters are springboards to English hypocrisy. The audience is supposed to approve of Isabella and disapprove of Claudio, whereas to-day anybody who behaved like Isabella or refused to behave like Claudio would be quietly but firmly put away.

Margaret Kennedy's new play, *Autumn*, is pretty good, and would be very nearly first-class if Basil Dean would cut the comic stuff out of it. If you've got a heavy drama play it as heavy drama, and don't try to capture the light-comedy public as well. The second half of the second act reaches the level from which Jean-Jacques Bernard never departs. Flora Robson, Wyndham Goldie, and Victoria Hopper quite moved me, the last-named in her "Martine" way. *Hide and Seek* at the Hippodrome was better fun than usual, largely owing to Cicely Courtneidge. There is a scene very like the American ballet called *Barn Dance*. Cicely interrupts this, saying, "What is a-going on 'ere, if you please?" Why is she not allowed to interrupt *every* ballet? I should love to see her come on in the Berlioz *Scène aux*

(*hamps*, point to the stag, and demand to be told, "And what is this 'erc, may I h'ask? "

Oct. 18 *More First Nights* published to-day. *First Nights Monday.* was a tall, slim volume bound in yellow. This, I suppose, is why its sequel is a short, squat volume bound in black. However, Gollancz has got away from his yellow jacket and given it a blue one. Which is something. It might sell 500 copies, though I doubt it.

Met Eddie Marsh at lunch and told him that Viola Tree, though quoting in her book of *Modern Manners* (also published to-day) something I said at the famous dinner to him, had given nothing of his speech, not even the lovely opening: "To talk about myself would be egotistic, to talk about anything else would be irrelevant." Eddie asking why I had not let Viola have my speech *in extenso*, I reeled off as much as I could remember of Rosebery's remark in his *Life of Pitt*: "Few speeches which have produced an electrical effect on an audience can bear the colourless photography of a printed record." We talked a lot about Viola and her family, and Eddie quoted with great gusto Lady Tree's reply to somebody complimenting her on the way she had done her hair: "How sweet of you to call it my hair!" Hamish Hamilton and some American—I suspect the head of Harper's—were there, and we all discussed what on earth Viola could mean in her *Hints on Hunting*: "Avoid jumping too near: in other words, on top of anyone who may be following you over the fences." I suggested that V. may have been out with the Humpty and Dumpty, over the Alice-in-Wonderland country.

Oct. 19 The Zola film at the Carlton. The word 'Jew' is Tuesday. not mentioned, and all question of anti-Semitism hushed up, Dreyfus's nationality and faith appearing for less than a second on some printed document.

Oct. 21 Jock, asking James Bone if he was obliged to Thursday. review my Dreyfus play, received this answer in pitiless Scotch: "The *Manchester Guardian*

is very much interested in the Dreyfus case. It is also interested in James Agate. Whether it is interested in the two in conjunction is another matter."

After Mary Manning's *Youth's the Season . . . ?* comes Lady Longford's *Anything but the Truth*. Both contain portraits of a Dublin homosexual. Lionel Hale in to-day's *News Chronicle* says that this trend, new to Irish drama, "marks the beginning of the Sodom-and-Begorra School."

Oct. 22 E. F. Saxton, the American head of Harper's, and Friday. Hamish Hamilton were twin hosts at a dinner-party at the Garrick Club to-night. The company, set down clockwise, was Saxton, Malcolm Sargent, Julian Huxley, Peter Fleming, Stanley Casson, Harold Raymond, Richard Hughes, Frederick Prokosch, Hamish, Cyril Lakin, St John Ervine, A. G. Macdonell, Michael Arlen, me, Horace Horsnell, and H. M. Tomlinson. The best wine was a lovely Pontet-Canet 1894. Lots of good talk, my contribution being that at Gollancz's dinner-parties even the game has two left wings. A. P. Herbert and Ivor Brown came in later.

Oct. 23 A charming hour of listening-in this evening. Saturday. First some of the chamber music of one Buxtehude, who appears to have flourished in the late seventeenth century. The players were David Wise, Eva Heinitz, and Ernest Lush, and the instruments violin, viola da gamba, and harpsichord. The sound was not in the least 'tinny,' and lovely enough to account for the Dolmetsch fuss. Whether it was the medium or not—and the wireless can play all kinds of tricks with the *volume* of sound—I was immensely impressed by the richness of the combination. One of the items was a grand Toccata in G, in which Lush made the harpsichord sound like a Bechstein. I suppose the purists will say this was wrong. Afterwards we had the B.B.C. Orchestra doing a steeplechase over the Borodin No. 1 course, Henry Wood up. The concert began with Granville Bantock's "Pierrot of the Minute" overture,

an entrancing, Strauss-like version of the "Après-midi." Why can't one get a new record of this? The existing one must be ten or twelve years old.

Oct. 24 Sydney Carroll on the treatment of the Dreyfus *Sunday*. incident in the Zola film: "The racial side of the struggle is not unduly emphasised"! The exclamation mark is mine.

Spent the afternoon and evening at "Q" Theatre, where the dress-rehearsal of *J'Accuse!* took six hours. Seven scenes and thirty-four speaking parts. The big-part actors huddle in threes in dressing-rooms the size of armchairs; the lesser fry dress in Gunnersbury. There are so many props that it is impossible to get round the stage; even then half of them are in the yard under a tarpaulin. To-morrow it will, of course, rain like hell. One actor had colic, another had displaced a cartilage, a third had mislaid his false teeth. But Clarke-Smith and Devlin are going to be grand, and there is a hair-raising performance of *Maître Labori* by Gordon McLeod. The play is tremendous in outline; the point is whether the audience will mind being a bit fogged over details which I could only have clarified completely by throwing the facts overboard. In the Zola film the clarification is such that one feels that a police magistrate would have seen through the conspiracy in half an hour.

Oct. 26 It rained like hell, and the play went magnifi-
Tuesday. cently. There wasn't a cough throughout the entire evening, and not only the acts, but even the curtains to the scenes were received with immense applause. I think that what the audience liked most was the fact that here was something for the players to get hold of. Devlin got every ounce of effect out of Zola's rhetoric, and Rehfisch told me that Clarke-Smith's Esterhazy was better than any he had had in Germany. The chief amazement of the evening was brought about by the young actor who played Anatole France. The character is not on the stage more than three minutes, and in this short space Gabriel Toyne, without doing anything that one could single out, not only

put the author of *L'Île des Penguins* before us, but re-created the whole atmosphere of literary France at the end of the last century. I have never seen anything quite so remarkable in its way, or heard a more enthusiastic outburst of applause than he evoked. I don't suppose that any London manager will pay the slightest attention to Toyne, all the same.

The notice I like best is A. E. Wilson's, in the *Star*. This is probably because it is the most flattering :

Mr Agate's task was to bring some clarity and coherence into this extraordinary tangle of lies, deception, forgery, intrigue, false patriotism and fanaticism, and, without interfering with the natural elements of the Dreyfus case, to bring into relief the characters and qualities expected in stirring drama. The task is well accomplished. Zola, with his passionate, crusading zeal—more concerned, perhaps, with the abstract cause of truth and liberty than with the prisoner of Devil's Island—is the hero, and very magnificently does William Devlin play the part, particularly in his appearance in the Law Courts. Here he delivers his famous indictment with the shattering vehemence of an inspired champion. The effect is electric. . . .

Oct. 31 Ivor Brown, in the *Observer*, calls the play *Sunday*. "baffling and chaotic." And again: "If you start with a complete knowledge of Parisian backstairs gossip in 1897 it may be lucid." How right I have been to include that Intaglio!

Nov. 1 A letter from Edith Shackleton, who took W. B. *Monday*. Yeats to Kew :

89 Bedford Street
Strand

London, W.C.2

MY DEAR JIMMIE,

Oct. 29, 1937

They gave us the best seats in the house and we had a grand time. The place was full—a more intelligent and better-looking audience than those we have spent so much of our lives among 'up West.' I was delighted to discover that I'm not, after all, tired of the theatre, but only of plays about which doll goes to bed with which.

Yeats asked me to tell you that he had greatly enjoyed the play. He gave it that profound attention of which genius only is capable. Of course he remembers l'affaire vividly—Maude Gonne's salon in Paris was rent by it. He suspects that you have been too respectful to the German writers and thinks you could simplify. His recipe (he works a lot on plays for the Abbey) is to set down the stuff as pure play and then put back any essential bit of history. He also said that it would probably be better liked—the French being our allies—if we made it clear that the villain is not the French army, but the Army spirit that might be in any country. But he was never for an instant bored. Indeed, we were both quite excited by it and sorry when it was over.

Yours ever—and gratefully,
EDITH

Of last week I remember nothing at all. It seems I took part in a controversy. An old friend of mine, one John Stainton, had written to the *S.T.* objecting to a statement by Desmond MacCarthy that Jane Hading was a "lovely but poor actress":

Now, Jane Hading made annual appearances in London at a time when successive French seasons were given by the following: Sarah Bernhardt, Réjane, Coquelin Aîné, Le Bargy, Silvain, Mme Bartet, Mme Le Bargy (later Mme Simone), de Féraudy, Antoine, Brasseur, etc., and invariably played to full, if not 'capacity' houses. Also she was considerably praised and welcomed by the critics of the time, a far less perfunctory set than those we have at present—presumably, because they had something more worth while to write about—Jane Hading, for instance.

I appear to have weighed in with this letter:

SIR,

I agree that Scott, Archer, Shaw, Max, Walkley, and Montague were giants in two heydays—their own and that of dramatic criticism. But they owed nothing of their gianthood to Jane Hading, who was never worth writing about. In France, where they have always known about acting, she was deemed a joke. The English public, persuaded that a woman with that figure, face, and hair must

be a great actress, made no difficulty about accepting their owner, though a favourite debate among the critics was whether she or Mrs Langtry was the less accomplished.

Montague was the pink of courtesy even when confronted with the worst acting, and the following passage shows how he got round poor Jane. The piece was Augier's *L'Aventurière*: "No one who cares about acting can fail to respect Mme Hading's. It lacks nothing but that which it is not in her power to give it. She is absorbed in the part of Clorinde, she understands everything in it, she plays patiently for distant results, subduing the tone of the part, as she does in *Frou-frou*, for whole acts, in order to raise it to relative brilliancy in the big scenes; she uses with judgment the medium given to her by nature, husbanding the special expressive values, for her art, of the beauty of level brows, bronze hair, self-repressive eyes, and firm-lined chin. She is as conscientious a crafts-woman as Mrs Kendal.

"One sits admiring and respecting the skill which takes so many well-judged means to well-conceived ends, and yet 'waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.' Some credible witnesses say that it has fallen—that her art took fire, in the good sense, when she played Ohnet's *Maître de forges*, or, later, in *Les Demi-Vierges*. We have not seen it; she still seems to us to lack the demonic part of genius which gives to the infinite taking of pains a unity and suddenness like those of acts of happy impulse. But her Clorinde is three times as good as her Frou-Frou; acting not fired by genius could scarcely be better than hers in the fourth act last night."

In other words, the poor lady was not a good actress, and Montague knew it. And so did I, and said so. I saw her in, among other things, *Maître de forges*, and when she must clutch her throat and cry, "*J'étouffe!*" all Jane could do was to put her hand to her bosom and feel if her pearl necklace was there. But she was magnificent to look at, like the Flying Scotsman at rest in King's Cross Station.¹

Yours, etc.

JAMES AGATE

¹ Lady Dorothy Nevill's *Under Five Reigns* contains a letter written to the author by the second Lord Lytton. It is dated August 25th, 1889, and has the sentence: "Jane Hading acted here the other night very badly."

Nov. 3 Balzac wrote to Madame Carraud, "I'm Wednesday. living, I'm wearing myself out, dreadfully."

And again, "There are some calls which we must needs obey, and an irresistible something draws me, willy-nilly, to seek Glory and Power." Madame Carraud replied, "How you have been misled by all those clouds of incense that have been offered you to your undoing! Have they not done their work, and is not your life a hell?"

But did Balzac ever work in the sense in which I understand work? I imagine that at least he was allowed to concentrate on the job in hand. I am not. On Monday of this week I started brushing my teeth at a quarter past ten, was interrupted to answer the 'phone, and kept going toothbrush in hand till a quarter to one. And then at last I was allowed to put my toothbrush down and leave for Bowdon, Cheshire, to deliver a lecture to a sticky audience all in evening dress. Spoke for an hour and a half, and then had to motor into Manchester to get a drink! Took Fred Dehn and his wife to supper at the Midland Hotel, which used to be individual and charming and now is merely sumptuous with the sumptuousness of all other hotels. How delightful it used to be, in 1904, to sit on the balcony of the French Restaurant and sip the Mouton Rothschilds and other great clarets of the sixties and seventies! I remember how Fred and I stood up to acclaim Sarah Bernhardt as she passed through the Winter Garden after playing *Pelléas et Mélisande*. But Manchester has changed. . . .

Got back yesterday in time to see Emlyn Williams as Richard III. Shakespeare's play may be better than mine, but I'll swear it's more complicated! Emlyn good second-rate, for he terrifies only the audience, whereas a first-rate Richard frightens his fellow-players.

Lunched to-day with Edith Sitwell at the Sesame Club to meet Louis Kentner, the pianist, his wife, a barrister called Sparrow, and young Richard Ainley. Osbert Sitwell told us how his chauffeur described a motor-smash: "There was a bloke who looked as if he had been decapitated."

Phoenix Theatre to-night to see Philip Merivale and Gladys

1937]

EGO 8

Cooper in James Parish's *Good-bye to Yesterday*, a Little-Eyolfish play that badly needed Wilfrid Lawson and Flora Robson.

Supper with B. at the Café Royal and got to bed about 2 A.M.

Nov. 4 Lunched with Harold Dearden at his flat in *Thursday*. Hay Hill. Frank Swinnerton, Hamish Hamilton, and Jock. Good talk, S. giving some wonderful imitations of Arnold Bennett, better than any professional mimic I have ever heard. The *exact* timbre. A lovely story of A.B. going on shore from the yacht in a marvellous suit of yellow waterproof overalls, and proposing to surmount them with a newly purchased straw hat: "I thought it might be [pause] smarter."

Nov. 5 Saw this in a pub :
Friday.

LADIES UNACCOMPANIED ARE
RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED
TO USE TABLES FOR THEIR
REFRESHMENTS AND NOT TO
STAND AT THE BAR AND OBLIGE

Nov. 6 Letter from Clifford Bax :
Saturday.

G2 Albany
London, W.1
Nov. 5, 1937

DEAR JAMES,

I see what it is. You and Priestley are so much surprised to find that the soul, discountenanced by intelligent persons since Darwin wrote his book, is, after all, real, and that death is a mere incident, that you have become excited about it—like the 'young men' to whom Plato refers. It seems to me a pity that neither you nor Jack Priestley should study the undramatic works of that neglected man—Bax. He had found it out at the age of nineteen, and if nobody reads him, so much the sorrier for everybody.

This note springs from my visit last night to the Royalty

Theatre; an amusing play, I admit, but the philosophy apt only to the Fourth Form. You must not mislead me so much.

Your faithful but admonitory

CLIFFORD BAX

Nov. 7 Great battles are fought on Sundays, and Great *Sunday*. Powers bring off their coups at the week-end in the knowledge that the English Cabinet will be buried in the country. But why must great players invariably choose Saturday morning for their dyings? This horribly affects the journalist, who must dither between natural feeling and the demands of his paper. It is Dr Grantly's quandary all over again. The Archdeacon did not want his father to die, but if he must die why not before the going out of the Ministry which was to make the son Bishop of Barchester? If a great actor must die, let it be so that my sad account of him can get into the first edition. Here is what I wrote about Forbes-Robertson, who died yesterday afternoon:

Not even the passing of an exquisite and greatly loved player entitles a critic to speak away from his own knowledge of that player. I first saw Forbes-Robertson on a night in October in the year 1897, when already he had half his career behind him and had acquired fame in the work of playwrights as far apart as Goldsmith and Bulwer-Lytton, Tom Taylor and Sardou, Pinero and Sudermann. Later he was to make a great stir in plays by Maeterlinck, Jerome, and Mr Shaw. Of my own knowledge I cannot speak of the young romantic flung from that fiery crater which was the Lyceum in the seventies and eighties to cool down into the best of modern classical actors. When I first saw Forbes-Robertson he had left youth behind him. I waited many hours that night outside the theatre, and my first impression of young Hamlet was that there were nearly as many lines on his face as there had been steps to the gallery.

Nevertheless, much was left of that striking beauty. Though the eyes were sunken and the trenches which forty-three winters had dug were deep, the brow was still unbesieged, and a great deal remained of that proud livery

of which Mr Shaw had given so good a picture two years earlier: "Mr Forbes-Robertson as Lancelot (*King Arthur*) has a beautiful costume, mostly of plate-armour of Burne-Jonesian design; and he wears it beautifully, like a fifteenth-century St George, the spiritual, interesting face completing a rarely attractive living picture." This infinitely graced actor had enough height and not too much. His hands were the most expressive I have seen on man or woman. He had one lovely gesture which often comes to my mind for no reason—the up-raising of the right arm with the left hand pulling back the too full sleeve.

A better writer than I has written: "Forbes-Robertson's use of the arms in rhetoric has the severe beauty that some of the great orators must have had, since nothing else can explain the terms in which some of those who heard them wrote of this part of their execution. The beauty of each gesture is almost abstract in its purity; the raised arm, did it mean nothing, is still a lovely line." And so it was. The voice was so noble as to deserve Hamlet's epithet, though in another sense, of "miraculous organ." No actor that I have heard has equalled his delivery of "this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestic roof fretted with golden fire." Nor has any other actor that I have known achieved the scorn of his "foul and pestilent congregation of vapours." His mastery of prose—it is unnecessary to say anything about his verse-speaking—was extraordinary. I find in my notebooks of thirty years ago a London critic saying of that tangled verbiage which Henry James called a play that Forbes-Robertson "talked it to a wonder."

His Hamlet was built on two notes of magnanimity and indignation. As to the latter, I have the support of Professor Elton, who wrote of the actor's "turn for mordant humour," and of Montague, who, ten years later, called attention to "the breeding and the mordancy of his ironical passages." Of the first performance of this Hamlet Mr Shaw wrote: "Mr Forbes-Robertson is essentially a classical actor. What I mean by classical is that he can present a dramatic hero as a man whose passions are those which have produced the philosophy, the poetry, the art, and the stagecraft of the world, and not merely those which have produced its weddings, coroners' inquests, and executions." And therein lay the secret not only of

strength, but of weakness. It was Forbes-Robertson's undoing that he took too much to heart that line about not overstepping the modesty of Nature. It was not in his temperament to realise that Nature is not always modest. "These are wild and whirling words," says Horatio; Forbes-Robertson was never wild and he never whirled. Therefore all that, to use shorthand, Baudelairean spleen, all that business over the body of Polonius, had to go by the board. When it came to uttering the line "I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room!" Forbes-Robertson's lips refused their office.

On the other hand, this punctiliousness and nicety stood him in good stead in the scene with the Queen. Sarah Bernhardt said to me approvingly of this, "On ne doit jamais être grossier envers sa mère!" And again, when Hamlet leaped into Ophelia's grave, it was done, not as so many actors do, out of Hamlet's own bombast and overweeningness, but through offence taken by the dilettante at the excess of bravery in Laertes' grief.

I make no excuse for dealing only with Hamlet: Forbes-Robertson was a player good enough to be tested by his strongest link. The *Third Floor Backs* of his later days were the easy triumphs of a tired man and nearly great actor—Irving bars the way to absolute greatness—who, though each of his many parts was acted with passionate care, openly admitted that he had never cared passionately for acting. Nevertheless, having put his hand to his job, he stuck to it. If mantles can descend, Irving's fell upon Forbes-Robertson.

I am adamant on this matter of near-greatness. Ellen Terry says in her *Memoirs*:

I have seen many Hamlets—Fechter, Charles Kean, Rossi, Frederick Haas, Forbes-Robertson, and my own son, Gordon Craig, among them—but they were not in the same hemisphere! I refuse to go and see Hamlets now. I want to keep Henry Irving's fresh and clear in my memory until I die.

See also C. E. Montague's letter to Francis Dodd:

It's good to have seen F. Robertson's Hamlet, for Heaven knows when we shall see as fine a one of its kind; though I love one like the old Irving's better—all over

faults but a regular globe of passion and romance with huge subterranean caverns and flames of fire inside it.

Jock, by the way, says there's too much in my article of what other people thought about F.R. and not enough of my own view of him. This is possible. (Odd that I should be accused of writing too little about myself in the diary and too much about myself everywhere else!) Where I, personally, fault my article is that it tells the truth, but not the whole truth. Forbes-Robertson was a gracious and noble actor, and in his private life a gracious and noble gentleman. Nature had given him everything—or almost everything. She gave him one of the most handsome and distinguished countenances ever seen on the boards; the profile had an ethereal and passionless quality which enabled the actor to play a limited line of parts to the ravishment of all beholders. His mien, gait, and gesture were so full of breeding as to declare his Hamlet to be of another clay. He had a voice like a violoncello, and on it he played like a great master. Alas that F.R. had that strange infirmity which, if great artists are not themselves beset by it, besets their business-managers! Bernhardt would never play *Phèdre*. Irving flogged *The Bells*, *A Story of Waterloo*, and *The Merchant of Venice* to death. It was a sickening thing to be a boy forbidden the theatre except on Saturday nights, and then to find that if you wanted to see Irving you had to put up with Shylock all over again. And so with Forbes-Robertson, who used to make my childish soul vomit with his Saturday night *Third Floor Back*. There is no point in saying that F. R. put a halo round Jerome's rubbish. Of course he did; he could have put a halo round a tom-cat, and one knows that this play will always be popular with the cleverer kind of charwoman and the stupider sort of clergyman. I don't think F. R. knew much about 'quality' in plays. All was grist that came to his mill, in the sense that the mill turned Shakespeare, Jerome, and Mrs Ryley of *Mice and Men* fame into the same noble paste. I remember hearing him speak at a dinner at the Authors' Club on the subject of modern painting. His speech was all about the moral beauty of art

and the moral ugliness of painters like Cézanne. The same sort of nonsense His Grace the Archbishop of York was talking last week: "There is nothing so drab and dismal as 'modern' life depicted by 'modern' artists."

Nov. 10 'Alibi' again! In a collection of film criticisms called *Garbo and the Night Watchman* I find this:

To me there is a complete Bible in the line spoken by Rex Ingram as de Lawd: "Even bein' God ain't no bed of roses." That satisfies the evolutionist in me, and is the best explanation *and alibi* I've ever heard for God's wars and for droughts and for poverty and for politicians and for the backache I have this morning.

Nov. 11 That dear fellow and prize clown Fred Leigh let me oversleep this morning for the first time for two years. With the result that I had a belated Two Minutes' Silence all to myself. Ridiculous, but as solemn as I could make it.

Nov. 12 A day of successes:
Friday.

- (1) Jock invents a name for a film star—Vomica Nux.
- (2) Highly metaphysical letter from Brother Edward dated "Nov. 11, in a thick fog" and with the postscript, "I am deep in Sydney Horler."
- (3) Monty telephones that the car of the British Ambassador in Paris is numbered EGO 2.
- (4) Letter from a daughter of Clement Scott asking if I will accept her father's scrap-book of *memoranda dramatica*: "The first cutting is from the *Morning Post* for Dec. 80th, 1811. *Venice Preserved* at Covent Garden Theatre. The last entry is dated 1838, and is a notice of Kean's *Othello*."

Nov. 14 Ernest Newman in to-day's *S.T.*:
Sunday.

Mankind's time-sense changes with the centuries: a pace of forty miles an hour, which would have seemed dizzy to

people of a century or two ago who had never travelled faster than about ten miles an hour, seems a snail's pace to the motorist or airman of to-day. Does it not stand to reason that the time-sense must have changed somewhat in music also, that a pace which would have seemed a decorous *adagio* in the eighteenth century would be dismally slow for us, while a modern *presto* would have seemed intolerably fast to a listener of that epoch? Where, then, do we stand in this plaguy matter of *tempo*? If, in the first place, there is reason to believe that if Beethoven were living now he would have a different scale of time values from those of 1800, and when, in the second place, we know that he changed his opinion in later years as to the 'rightness' of the *tempi* he himself had indicated for his earlier works at the time of writing them, how are we to decide what is the 'right' *tempo* for this or that work of his to-day?

Quite easily. The 'right' *tempo* for the works of Beethoven or anybody else is the last *tempo* laid down by the composer. If there is anything in Newman's argument, every time we shorten the journey to America means chipping a bit off the *Venus de Milo's* nose.

Nov. 17 Went last night to *The Silent Knight*, the new *Wednesday*. play at the St James's. This is a comedy by a Hungarian author, one Eugene Heltai, translated into English verse by Humbert Wolfe. Bored to catalepsy. Took Julian Phillipson to the Café Royal afterwards and dictated a rough draft for the following, quite ruining his supper :

"Give me my principal and let me go!"
 Muttered old Shylock to Antonio.
 "Give us good rate of interest, and we'll stay!"
 Murmur all those who mean to like a play.
 Such the fond hope of gentles and their dames,
 Making their way to King Street in St James,
 Putting full trust in comedy Hungarian,
 Prepared to laugh with Aryan or Non-Aryan,
 Telling the story of a lover bold
 Condemned to hold his tongue to please a scold.
 Or, if you like, 'tis coquetry's fair daughter
 Reeking of fifteenth-century Bayswater.

The play, they knew, had passed the acid test—
 Two years in Buda, nearly three in Pesth.
 To let them down was not the way of Miller
 Who gave his orders thus:— “ Withhold no siller!
Settlings designed by Otto Niedermoser,
 Costumes by G. K. Benda. Sure the show’s a
 Wow—if you’ll pass the strong Amurrican—
 To lift the roof off in a hurricane.
 Nothing omit to make assurance sure,
 Take up the scent and follow up the spoor
 Of poet Wolfe, whose artless-artful tinkle
 Evokes delight as pin elicits wrinkle! ”
 Thus Gilbert spake; the stage-hands roared applause.
 Not so first-nighters, whose well-mannered jaws
 Yawned to distraction, all bewailing that
 They had not stayed at home by hearth and cat,
 With pipe and book or even highbrow wireless
 To prove the tired business-man is tireless.
 Let us be fair. The show was mighty pretty,
 The verse but wanted wit to make it witty.
 Deprived of this medicament or nostrum,
 We thought of speech day and the High School rostrum;
 Guessed, though the playing could not well be properer,
 The thing had been much better as an opera.
 Judged that the Wynyard, languorous Diana,
 Though acting grandly, lacked a grand pianer.
 That Richardson, at home with king or hobo,
 Needed an obbligate by the oboe.
 That flower-like Scott, the ox-eyed Margaretta,
 Should have bel-canto’d à la Violetta.
 Doth simile break down ’neath brave Lyn Harding?
 We for our halting Muse must then beg parding.
 Dressed, mounted, acted, everything to please
 Th’expectant tiers, why should the thing just tease?
 Why should romance modelled on old Cyrano
 Not prove what Curzon called a grand be-ano?
 Why sate the audience wholly bored and glum?
 Plain stared the reason—the poor play was dumb!
 Nor Grimm nor Andersen wrote story sillier
 Than this of tongue-tied Peter and his Zilia.

Nov. 20 This is how I spent yesterday. Woke about seven
Saturday. and read letters. Found one from the *S.T.* asking
 me to contribute six questions to a General
 Knowledge paper for Christmas. It occurred to me that
 such questions *ought to be set without reference to text-*
books. Wherefore I waived breakfast and settled down in
 bed to propounding *twelve* questions, leaving Jock to pick
 out the six best.

Rushed out at three o’clock for a bite of food and spent

the afternoon dictating a couple of articles and skimming Gilbert Murray's translation of *Electra*. Then to the play, which was Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*. This began at seven and finished at eleven. Beatrix Lehmann very fine. Jock confessed this morning that to write a notice of this under the hour was trying him pretty high: "I don't suppose Flaubert would have been much good at my job. He would have handed in half a dozen provisional words and told the printer to expect *le mot juste* next week!" Supped at B.'s, where the talk was about the morality and efficacy of juvenile birching. B.'s point was the nervous disturbance set up, and I told them about a boy at school who had a passion for throwing ink-bottles at the wall. He was a nasty, grubby little boy, and the more they caned him the more ink-bottles he threw. One couldn't suspect a liking for being caned, since he would blub for an hour afterwards. But the canings were efficacious in so far as the weals on his hands kept the rest of us in order. B. said that to-day such a kid would be psycho-analysed, and George Mathew said the proper thing to have done was to paint the schoolroom wall black. Broke up about three, leaving the question where Dr Johnson left the details of the future state—to be settled some other time.

Nov. 21 I say to-day of Reginald Tate's *Ægisthus* in the *Sunday*. Eugene O'Neill play that it is a fine study in the "breezy-ominous." This appeared in the proof as "breezy omnibus"!

Went to the Palladium to hear Moiseiwitsch, though it meant sitting through the stale Tschaikowsky Piano Concerto and the staler Pathétique. Leo said, "At our time of life we don't go to hear the classics, but only to hear them played. I've heard Arabella Goddard, Rubinstein, Hans von Bülow, Fanny Davies, Stavenhagen, Sophie Menter, and a hundred more in the 'Emperor,' not to mention that old bitch Essipoff, and besides playing it myself. Why should I want to hear it again?" Later, with great humour, "It's all a matter of the instrument. Let me play on Moiseiwitsch's

piano, and let him play on some I've had to contend with—and he will still be the better performer ! ”

Afterwards called on Peter Page, who is in bed with a bad attack of gout, but not too ill to challenge Morgan's statement in the *Times* about the Habima Players: “The bar of language becomes not a bar but a release. It is even possible that, if the words were understood, the range of the play might seem to decrease.”

J.A. Arnold Bennett always maintained that opera is only tolerable if it's given in an unknown language.

P.P. But *The Dybbuk* isn't opera, or even ballet. And it's all nonsense about not needing to understand the words. I remember going to the theatre in Athens and seeing a play called *The Sister of the Mother of Karolos*. It was an hour before I found out that the play was a Greek version of *Charley's Aunt*.

Nov. 23 To the H.M.V. studios in Abbey Road to hear and *Tuesday*. watch Moiseiwitsch record the Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2. The London Philharmonic Orchestra, with a young German called Goehr conducting. The Concerto runs to eight sides, each of which was rehearsed three or four times before it was recorded. Sometimes the conductor stopped them in the middle of recording. They did the *fugato* in the last movement six times before fiddles and piano could get together. Good fun to watch—Benno in his shirt-sleeves, the conductor in a sweater, and everybody smoking, the double-basses indulging in pipes and wearing bowler hats.

Nov. 24 Lunched at Garrick Club with St John Ervine *Wednesday*. and Jimmie Horsnell. All of us much upset at the death of Lilian Baylis, whom Horsnell and I regard as having been of more importance to the culture of our time and the drama of the country as a whole than the entire crop of London managers since the War.

Nov. 25 Am presenting the *D.E.* with a drama in four *Thursday*. acts entitled *The Novelist and the Reviewer* :



Benno Moiseiwitsch

ACT ONE

The Novelist writes:

DEAR JAMES AGATE,

When my last book came out you said I was getting into a rut. To please you I sat down and wrote an entirely different kind of novel called *Flumes Coming Out of the Top*. Why are no flames coming out of your top? In plain English, why haven't you reviewed it?

Your aggrieved

NORMAN COLLINS

ACT TWO

The Reviewer replies:

DEAR NORMAN COLLINS,

I throw myself on your mercy. Your novel is full of words like *hacienda* and *caballero*. Now I have a complex against anything Spanish or South American. Also I have an aversion to writers living in Putney who insist on telling me about hari-kari, head-hunting, and typhoons in the Marquesas. And you work in Henrietta Street and have a charming house in Hampstead! My secretary tells me that this attitude of mine is weak and impermissible. Well, I stick to the weak and impermissible with all the tenacity of a thoroughly obstinate man. A complex is a complex.

Ever your otherwise devoted

JAMES AGATE

ACT THREE

The Novelist ripostes:

DEAR JAMES AGATE,

A thousand thanks for your letter. But if you will forgive my saying so, you have really missed the whole point. I have never for a moment pretended that I know anything at all about South America. I have never been there; so far as I know I have never met a South American; I don't like the sound of the place; for years I thought that Patagonia was in Asia; I prefer Scotch beef to Argentine; and if the Pacific met the Atlantic to-morrow somewhere below Mexico, I should not be

seriously concerned until the resulting tidal wave actually reached me.

On the other hand, I have read a lot of Monsignor Hudson and Comrades Fleming and Farson, and some time ago I found in the house (heaven knows how it came there !) a copy of a perfectly entrancing work entitled *The South American Handbook*. I then read a lot of books on South America by other writers and evolved what seemed to me a perfectly fair equation, namely that those people who, with the very notable exceptions of Mons. H. and Comrades F. and F., have been to South America but cannot write, equal those people who can write but have not been to South America.

The more I pondered on this line of thought the more attractive it seemed to me; and in the result my jungles are gloomier and more impenetrable, my volcanoes fiercer and more active, my Spaniards more Spanish, my flora more floriegated, and my fauna more ferocious than ever was on land or sea. I tell you that it is a charade that knocks spots off the real thing; what wounds me in your attitude is that for a moment you should have thought that I really and solemnly thought that I could hoodwink you, James Agate, into believing that it was Gospel. I don't even, at the moment of writing, remember what the word *caballero* means. If I actually used it, I have no doubt that it produced an effect of excruciating beauty in its right context. But I should have to turn up the phrase-list at the end of *The South American Handbook* before I dared to use it again!

Yours ever,
NORMAN COLLINS

ACT FOUR

The Reviewer has the last word:

I, James Agate, having now read *Flames Coming Out of the Top*, have pleasure in certifying that it is as lurid and exciting as the author, Mr Norman Collins, declares. The hero, who is sent to South America to recover debts owing

to his firm, meets with many surprising adventures. I should be happy to tell the reader what these adventures were if it were not that my *camerero* announces that it is tea-time and the *yerba* is waiting in the *hacienda*. So I can only advise readers to send *telégramas* to their *librero* together with a postal order for the sum of seven and a half *bolivianos*, when I have no doubt that the bookseller will oblige a *vuelta de correo*. Which, as every schoolboy knows, is Spanish for 'by return of post'!

Nov. 26 The Old Vic. *Macbeth*. Olivier's hands at the end *Friday*. were blacker than any coal-heaver's, which only happens when *Macbeth* has been pretty good. I've seen them come on in the fifth act waving lily paws.

Nov. 28 Here is what I wrote in to-day's *S.T.* about Lilian *Sunday*. Baylis:

There was no nonsense about the Old Vic's manager, though "proprietor" was the word one used mentally. "Forthrightness, thy name is Baylis!" would have been a good motto for her. What I have to say about her will therefore be said forthrightly.

Consult any of her portraits and you will see what flatterers described as a sardonic smile, this being a way of getting round the fact that the mouth was not in the middle of the face. But the mind was dead-centre. And that is the first, and the last, and very nearly the only thing to be said about Lilian Baylis. Though every stone in the building prated of her whereabouts, though the influence of her directing hand could be felt everywhere, though she ran the thing as thoroughly as a business, the owner was not much in evidence. Being the head and front of the whole affair, she did not need to advertise the fact. She was too prominent to put herself forward.

She was short and odd to look at, she hung little gold chains over her rusty black dresses, and her speech was blunt. Yet she was wholly immovable. Indeed, I have always suspected that if another little, immovable Royal lady had still been alive to visit Lilian Baylis's theatre she would have sat in the box chosen by Lilian and taken tea when Lilian directed. For Lilian was the Old Vic's Queen.

As soon as she took up the reins of management in the Waterloo Road she resolved that through this dingy theatre, cheek by jowl with squalor, drink, bad language, smells, and all the concomitants of slumdom, should blow the great gale of Shakespeare. And for twenty-five years it has blown, reducing everything else in theatrical London, with here and there an honourable exception, to "piffle before the wind."

Lilian Baylis re-made that dramatist who at the beginning of the nineteenth century reigned at Drury Lane, but at the end of it had fallen before the scorn of the time and *The Whip* of Arthur Collins. She made a new audience, and among the litter and refuse railed off something that was to become the holy ground of the London theatre. And as if that was not enough, she went on to rescue Sadler's Wells, where rude little boys were throwing stones at the ghost of Samuel Phelps.

Hers was and is a theatre for the people in the narrow sense, and the impulse to make it so undoubtedly sprang from the fact that she was of the people. It was and is the theatre of a people in the larger sense of the whole nation. She did for London what Frank Benson was doing for the provinces. Benson began in 1883. Baylis died last week. Their span gave England a National Theatre which has endured for more than fifty years *and is in being*.

At the opening of the present season Lilian Baylis said: "I don't care a dash about the National Theatre. When I think of all the work that has been done by our three companies—drama, opera, and ballet—I know *we* are the National Theatre!" That was a characteristic pronouncement, and only a fool would doubt its rightness. Our intrepid manager had one of the characteristics of the great artist; she did her greatest work when her difficulties were greatest. The roof might leak, there might be holes in the bank balance, but still she hammered away at presenting the complete cycle of Shakespeare's plays. If London has a Coopers' Guild, Lilian Baylis was its spiritual head. She achieved her object, sometimes with the help of the best players, and sometimes with the help of the next best. She was obstinate yet fluid, and had the close secret of giving a stage-producer his head and at the same time keeping him well in hand. It is an open secret that people did not make the journey to Waterloo to ecstasise

over this actor or that producer. They came to see the plays of Shakespeare, and the spirit of Shakespeare received them.

We shall not have done with Lilian Baylis when we leave the graveside and the trumpets have packed up. Or, rather, Lilian Baylis will not have done with us. As an impresario of Shakespeare she knew all about the haunting propensities of evil spirits, and now her good spirit is to haunt us. No jot of energy, no tittle of foresight, must be spared to keep the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells where they magnificently stand. You cannot fool all the people all the time. But you can inspire all of them all the time, and it is up to us to see that that granite spirit which was Baylis's is not whittled away either wilfully or carelessly.

The point, she would say, is not what she did when she was with us, but what we are going to do now that she has left us. What her spirit really wants to know is who is going to succeed her. A committee can draft a Parliamentary Bill; it cannot run a theatre like the Old Vic. Several names suggest themselves, but this is not the place to discuss them. The point I want to urge, because it is the one point which would satisfy Lilian, is that Amurath shall be succeeded by Amurath, and a strong woman by a man or woman equally strong. It is better to be strong and sometimes wrong than weak and occasionally right. Lilian Baylis may have had her weaknesses, though I never heard of any. The lasting things about her are her courage, her persistence, and her faith.

Nov. 30 Yan tan tethera pethera pimp, sethera lethera
Tuesday. hovera bovera dik, yan-a-dik tan-a-dik tethera-
 dik pethera-dik bumfit, yan-a-bumfit tan-a-bumfit
tethera-bumfit pethera-bumfit figgit.

These, of course, are Cymric numerals still used by shepherds in counting sheep. I think of them whenever I hear Moiseiwitsch adding up the bridge score in Russian.

Dec. 1 Motored to Oxford yesterday to talk to the
Wednesday. English Society of Corpus Christi. In the
 Mitre met Leslie French, who was lecturing to the Pater Society at some other college. He feared we should have poor houses, as a third society was doing

Purcell's *Dido and Æneas*. After I had gone up to dress I had a flash of *esprit d'escalier* for which I could have kicked myself. I ought to have said to Leslie, "Nonsense. Dido and her Æneas shall want troops, And all the haunt be ours." Moderate attendance, about fifty. The chair was taken by a don called Ridley, the editor of the *New Temple Shakespeare*. Very affable.

They can't keep women out of the University, it seems. But they should not let them pester a tired-out guest. One of the intense sort insisted on joining a quiet party at the Randolph afterwards. Women have no social sense, and no idea that they don't go with whisky and a pipe. All anybody wanted to do was to chat, and for two hours this questing female kept on at me. What did I think of Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet? Bernhardt's, Barrymore's, Swinley's, Ainley's, Gielgud's, Olivier's? And so on, interminably, till my nerves were raw. Got away at twelve and home at two-thirty, having missed our way and meandered through wet and soggy hinterlands.

Was given a copy of *Programme*, edited by one of my hosts. This is a magazine of poetry and criticism, most of it wildly above my head. Here is a bit from a poem entitled *On the Sands*:

And hovering on the margins of the air
 Dominions, dangerously suspended, pose,
 Hypnotized audience of the dinosaur
 Whom cruel anachronisms still enclose;
 Whose feeble reflexes throw sillier waves
 Into the clammy ether. Later spread
 Through the acoustic systems of new worlds
 Reports of how the sewage finds the tide.

On the other hand I like another poet's

The wind howls round the empty bandstand's base,
 Smacking the bottoms of green canvas chairs.

This has an odd note of Rimbaud.

I also like a third young man's

To feel in what once was our life,
 Without aphasia or sudden surgeon's knife,
 Without the excuse of absentmindedness,
 The gentle snowfall of a paralysis.

Also a fourth's Sitwellian *Fox Trot* :

On
The
Golf-course of Bucharest
Miss Kerr the eucharist
Forgot her guests
Her disconsolate breasts
Stared at the starred
Sky and the hard
Skim-milk shard
Of the flesh-curdling moon
Vaguely she
Waited for some one to
Come and do
Something tread on her
Leer
Creeping things fed on her
Calves and the valves
Of her heart felt queer.

But I don't think I grasp the request of an undergraduette :

Forge me a lovely tool vein to seek and carve for me
From quarry-ends of time and death
A rare and ever-during thing
That I may show a master smith my skill and my desire.

And here is the end of an essay on Ronald Firbank, reproduced exactly as printed :

The hypocrite lecteur is neither Firbank's semblable nor his frère; he might just as well never have read the book, for all the effect it will have upon his opinions or his life. But he will, I suppose, derive a pleasant experience, a slight bouquet of Château Neuf du Pape, from those slim polychroite volumes.

How is it that these clever babies, when they leave Oxford, never do anything except piauler in the slim, monochroite *New Statesman* ?

This morning the 'phone rang at what seemed to be five o'clock. It was an old lady of eighty wanting me to go to her cocktail party ! Got up in time for the Memorial Service to Lilian Baylis, after which a second visit to *Macbeth* to confirm my views of Olivier's performance. Here, as I passed through the pit, I recognised a long-forgotten odour—the smell of schoolboys *en masse*, transporting me to the Benson

matinées in the eighties. Snatched forty winks and dressed for a dull play about Pepys, followed by supper at Marie Tempest's with Jock and a Dutch decorator. She received us in a gown of no substance, and when I asked the colour replied, "Flamme!" The new flat is of exquisite taste and as unlivable-in as a stage set, the bedroom being sister to Cleopatra's barge. I rather wonder that, like Rachel, Mary doesn't have another room to sleep in. The evidence that the French actress had one bedroom for show and another for use is contained in Fleischmann's *Rachel Intime*:

Proche du salon, au même étage, la chambre à coucher. "Nous n'introduirons pas le lecteur dans la chambre à coucher," prévient *La Chronique de Paris*. "Les bienséances nous font une loi de ne point franchir certaines limites." De ces bienséances, M. Hayaux du Tilly, commissaire-priseur, ne s'embarrassait point. En onze numéros sur catalogue, il détaillait les splendeurs de ce "boudoir de parade," pour reprendre le mot de Paul de Saint-Victor. Sous un couvre-pied oriental, en soie brodée d'or, au haut de son estrade à deux marches et dominé par un baldaquin à rideaux de pourpre, s'élevait le lit de triomphe de Phèdre. Large, énorme, de bois doré et sculpté, il se dressait sur le velours de l'estrade avec son capitonnage de soie, de damas cerise, flanqué d'un meuble en bois de rose avec un grand médaillon ovale en porcelaine de Sèvres, représentant un pastorage, lequel meuble renfermait un "vase de nuit en porcelaine de Saxe, avec sujets." C'est le catalogue qui le dit, page 4, au numéro 22.

Face au lit, dans son grand cadre de bois doré, se dressait un beau portrait d'Adrienne Lecouvreur, en tapisserie de Beauvais. Pour charmer ses rêveries, Rachel avait, dans un coin, un piano de chêne sculpté. "Le reste du meuble était de style rocaille," dit *La Presse*. En réalité, il était de style rococo, disparate, mélangé, sans unité de goût et de style. Dans cette chambre, une porte masquée communiquait avec une petite pièce sommairement meublée d'un lit étroit et tendue de perse. Là se réfugiait la tragédienne. Elle n'avait point encore pris l'habitude de son lit à la Louis XIV.

8 A.M. Am just dragging myself to my own couch.
Whacked!



With Marie Tempest

Dec. 2 It is humiliating to find that one is just ordinary
Thursday. flesh and blood. At the Sibelius concert to-night
 the fatigue that I have been fighting for some
 days attacked me so strongly that after thirty bars of his
 Sixth Symphony I fell fast asleep and remained so till the
 applause woke me up. I managed to pull myself together
 for the Seventh and Fourth. What fools they are who call
 these symphonies bleak and wind-swept! Still, it was rather
 fun to wind up with 'Karelia.' Like the Salvation Army on
 a beano. In this Beecham gave parody its head, three of his
 less august sides being particularly in evidence. First the
 militant side—the generalissimo, the storm-trooper, and the
 drum-major. Next all those graces and *minauderies*, like a
 housemaid putting on her hat before going to meet her
 Guardsman. Last that walk off at the end—a progress at
 once awe-inspiring and cocky, like a midwife who has de-
 livered royalty of an heir.

Dec. 5 Have just come in from lunching with Norman
Sunday. Haire, the psychiatrist, at his excitingly restored
 place at Hemel Hempstead, the other guest being
 a jolly young Australian journalist from the *D.E.* Name of
 Munday. (N. H. is an Australian.) Munday said that, down
 under, the newspaper reporter stands higher up in the social
 scale. (This is the first I ever heard of Australia possessing
 a social scale.) After lunch, in what used to be the tithe-
 barn, N. H. showed us some of the films he has taken, in-
 cluding a magnificent one of a bull-fight. He then told us
 a good deal about transvestists. It appears that these odd
 people—people are 'odd' when their peculiarities are not
 one's own—have an uncontrollable urge to put on the clothes
 of the other sex, not only in private, but in public. The
 urge, it seems, is as insistent as that compulsional neurosis
 which made Dr Johnson tap railings, and when I was a boy
 made me turn out the gas in my bedroom four times, in
 multiples of four; I suppose I must often have turned the
 tap on and off thirty-two times. I did not go beyond, be-
 cause I would get sleepy, and the next multiple was sixty-

four. N. H. said that 40 per cent. of these transvestists are heterosexual, 40 per cent. homosexual, while the remainder dress up for their own edification alone. These victims, addicts, or what you will, are not scallywags, but clergymen, schoolmasters, doctors, barristers, and big business-men who get worried by their infirmity and seek advice. It appears that for men to wear women's clothes in public, and for women to wear men's, is not a legal offence unless it is accompanied by an act likely to provoke a breach of the peace—which long-winded phrase conceals the homely 'importuning.' Now it is all very well for your Bishop, your Cabinet Minister, or your O.M. to wave your curious bobby away with the grandiose "It's all right, officer. I suffer from transvestism." But what about your wretched little hair-dresser, waiter, shop-assistant, who has the disease but doesn't know its name?

The talk then turned on Desmond MacCarthy's review of Laurence Housman's book about A.E. In the *S.T.* Desmond reprints the whole of the ballad about the young man whose hair was of a colour "nameless and abominable." After which he goes on:

The implication is obvious. It is an indirect expression of sympathy with those who through congenital temperament are disposed to fall in love with their own sex, and a protest against the severity with which they are treated. Readers of Housman's poems must have often been struck by the frequency with which love is associated in them with crime and punishment. The young man who has to swing for some deed not unaccompanied by generous emotion; the intimate association of passion with disgrace, frustration, and ruth are recurring notes in *A Shropshire Lad* and *Last Poems*. These poems are transpositions of a fellow-feeling with moral outcasts.

I think Desmond would have made his point even better if he had quoted the poem now printed for the first time and beginning:

Ask me no more, for fear I should reply;
Others have held their tongues, and so can I.

Probably D. M. has felt it ridiculous that the popularity of the most widely read modern English poet should be based on a complete misunderstanding of what his poems are about. Turning up my notebooks, I find that Desmond in his review of *Last Poems* has this :

It is strange, too, how often Housman saw the emblem of his own emotional life in an outcast, a youth condemned by other men to die in shame, and yet not strange once we suppose intense life came to him in the guise of "the love that dares not speak its name." His stoicism was of the head; it never steeled his heart, which remained tremulously, clamorously, helplessly sensitive. This was the clash, this the contradiction, that made and unmade by turns so fine a poet; sometimes inclining him towards too soft a pessimism, sometimes resolving itself perfectly as in that immortal cry of weakness and remonstrance, "Be still, my soul, be still; the arms you bear are brittle." I risk a guess that no modern poem has been so often on the lips of those who otherwise were dumb in their distress.

Desmond was much praised for his courage in writing this. But in his case the courage is merely intellectual. The really plucky thing would be for some eminent critic, publicist, preacher, playwright, who has known what Housman felt to come forward and challenge the notion that the cure for this condition is gaol. Doubtless it would have been 'nicer' if the gods had not visited Housman with the rustic passion. Doubtless it would have been charming for everybody if he had married the daughter of a rural dean. In which case we should not have had the poems. And what, I should like to know, is the answer to that?

In the evening attended the dinner given by the Critics' Circle to S. R. Littlewood on his completing 40 years of dramatic criticism. I made a speech, but not a very good one.

Dec. 6 Robert Taylor the film-star, when he went back *Monday*. to America yesterday, had not a single fan to see him off. He has behaved extremely well all the time he has been here, courting no notoriety.

Dec. 8 Pretty actresses can never be got to understand anything. I wrote of one the other day that she did not carry enough guns for some tragic part. Her letter of protest showed that she had not the vaguest notion what I meant. One should be simpler. One should take these pretty actresses on one side and say: "My dear, you have a charming face, as lovely and as expressionless as Buttermere. You are also a goodish actress, and when you have to be ravaged by passion you can get your face to look like Wastwater in a thunder-storm. But when the storm is over you go back to Buttermere, whereas an actress who knows the tragic job goes on looking like Wastwater."

Dec. 9 Ivor Novello said to me at lunch, "It's obvious, *Thursday*. James, that musical comedy bores you stiff.

Would you like me to write to your editor asking him not to send charming Mr Agate, whom we all adore, to musical pieces which he dislikes and doesn't understand?" The trouble is that I understand too well both the disease and the cause. Musical comedy has its roots deep down in the English people because of their passion for reconciling opposites. No play or novel is more popular than the one in which some monk resists the temptations of the flesh, yields, and, being trapped, becomes a Trappist. The essence of English balladry is in the line: "I know of two red lips praying for me." The essence of your musical play is tears in waltz-time.

I could get along quite well with the stuff if its concocters would be content with pretty music, clever dancing, lavish scenery, and a buffoon of genius. It is when they turn on a tongue-in-cheek sentimentality that I feign sleep, look round the house, or bury my head in my hands. In Mrs Piozzi's *Anecdotes of Samuel Johnson* this passage occurs:

I asked him once concerning the conversation powers of a gentleman with whom I was myself unacquainted. "He talked to me at club one day (replied our Doctor) concerning Catilina's conspiracy—so I withdrew my attention, and thought about Tom Thumb."

Similarly at these times of agonising boredom I withdraw my attention, and if I allow myself to be seen withdrawing it, it is only because, unlike Johnson, I am not "well-bred to a degree of needless scrupulosity." All the critics have their own private safeguards. Ivor Brown falls into a brown study, and Peter Page has an admirable purple glare.

By the way, Peter—his real name is Philip, but his friends call him Peter—has just provided a capital instance of the ruling passion which really rules. Too weak from his recent illness even to cross the room, he had himself carried down four flights of stairs by two St John Ambulance men and thence by motor-ambulance into a box at Covent Garden, merely to listen to *La Bohème*, which he has heard a hundred times. He held receptions between the acts, and at the end was carried back to bed.

Dec. 10 Went to parties given by Gerald Barry and *Friday*. Dorothy Ward, at the second of which I was snapshotted between my heart's delight, Dorothy, and my soul's idol, Bertha Belmore.

Dec. 12 At lunch at the Café Royal to-day got into conversation with a Perfect Stranger who told me that nerves are the result of a sense of guilt. Cease to believe in a moral code and you can do what you like with impunity so long as you don't do harm to anybody else :

J.A. But surely to abandon the moral code would ruin any country as degeneracy ruined Rome?

P.S. Nonsense. Rome was bound to fall anyhow, owing to the increased strength and improved leadership of the barbarians they had previously been too much for. Whereupon the prigs looked for a moral cause and found it in the Roman baths. It's the old tale of Sodom and Gomorrah. Some Mesopotamian oil-well was struck by lightning, whereupon an older lot of prigs trumped up their moral version of the incident.

J.A. But if you let young people grow up without any moral teaching what is to stop them from becoming pimps and prostitutes?

P.S. You mean, why shouldn't the girls go on the streets and the boys live on the girls?

J.A. Yes.

P.S. The law of supply and demand would step in. When everybody turns criminal there ceases to be any money in crime.

At this point, it being nearly four o'clock, the commissionaire came and turned us out. Being good philosophers, we each went our way without inquiring the other's name.

Dec. 15 Told Jock how, since Sunday, all the air I
Wednesday. breathe even in warm rooms has felt cold, like sniffing menthol. Asked him if he thought it was catarrh or nerves. Jock said, "See a catarrh man. If he says it isn't catarrh, go to a nerve specialist. If he says it isn't nerves, you've got Agate's disease, and you'll become famous like the unfortunate Mr Bright. But don't put that in your diary or some ass will write to say that Bright was a surgeon!"

Dec. 17 Lunched with Macbeth. He said that Milhaud's
Friday. incidental music, whose sheer inappropriateness so amused Jock and me, puts the entire company out of mood. Also told us about the Very Great Lady who sent for Lady Macbeth and said, "I couldn't have liked it better. I really felt for you in the scene in which you tried to make the party go!" Olivier showed me a holograph letter which had been given him on his first night. It is from Kean to Elliston and shows both sides of the man, the artist and the sensualist. With O.'s consent I give the letter here:

Superscription: R. W. Elliston, Esq., Theatre Royal,
Drury Lane, London.

Postmark: Belfast. No. 24. 1824.

DEAR ELLISTON,

Belfast, 24th November

There is a very clever Irishman in this company—with the exception of Johnstone the best I ever saw. I have no acquaintance with him, nor does he know that I am writing in his favour, but I conceive it a duty to pay the just

tribute to talent in whatever garb I find it. The actor's name is Conolly.

By the bye, you and I have had no communication since we were a little (two words illegible).¹ How do you do? How goes the Theatre? Where are all my women? Tell Newman to get some good brandy against the 15th of January—to drink damnation to whores and aldermen.

Yours,

EDMUND KEAN

Direct to the Woodend House, Isle of Bute. It is beautiful—plenty of game—women and Whiskey!!!

Postscript on back of letter: How is little Jack?

Stimulated thus, I tackle Clement Scott's newspaper-cutting book sent me by his daughter. In it I find a vigorous attack on Kean's acting and an equally vigorous defence of his morals:

ATTACK ON KEAN

10th May, 1818

Mr Kean has appeared in *Norval*, in the Tragedy of *Douglas*—and has given an additional confirmation to all the opinions which we have ventured to hold upon the general style of his acting. The performance had all the usual faults of Mr Kean, with the addition of his defects of voice, person, and action, for the personation of the character. Of his *person*, nothing needs to be said—for it is altogether without dignity. His *voice* is not only unfit for the expression of *all* the passions, but of any one of them—and the gusts of feeling, as they come and go, instead of being “like sounds of music borne upon the wind,” have the unvarying roar of a winter tempest. There is an eternal vehemence of *declamation*, *gesticulation*, and *vociferation*, about Mr K., and one tone of voice and expression over-spreads all his acting. He is like a man that attempts to perform a concerto on a violin with only one string—and that one out of tune. He mistakes rapidity of utterance for force of conception, and long pauses for—we know not what. Long pauses should be used very sparingly by all actors—for they can only be filled up by the expression of

¹ Jock conjectures that these two words are ‘on fire.’

the face and the eye—a language intelligible only to a small part of the audience. Mr Kean's face only expresses one passion—and that is, violent hatred—a passion which has no range or variety, but compels the face of the actor to remain as fixed and rigid as one of the pictures of Le Brun. His *action* is almost always faulty, either with reference to his part or to his person: Thus in *Richard III* while he is listening to *Buckingham*, he coolly puts his hands behind him, with the air of a linen draper; and he has an external elevation of both arms, like the cartoon of Paul preaching at Athens, or one of Fuseli's personages—an attitude which is preternaturally sublime in itself, but which is quite ridiculous on common occasions—and indeed on *all* occasions with Mr K.'s personal form. If there were nothing indeed but these *personal* defects to prevent Mr K. from becoming a great actor, these alone, we are persuaded, would be sufficient to obscure the splendour of all other qualifications, by preventing his genius from taking that range of universal nature, over which it is the prerogative of dramatic talent to exercise its dominion. Mr Kean is confined to one particular description of characters by deficiencies of person united to his individuality of feeling—and can no more be a great actor than an artist, who can give only the expression of passion, can become a great historical painter. If, indeed, all dramatic personages raved like *Sir Giles Overreach*, or gnashed their teeth à la *Barabas*, Mr Kean would certainly be the first of all actors—but this is not precisely the case. That of *Norval*, for example, is a character of which Mr Kean has not the remotest conception. It is one of *pathos*—not of *passion*—Mr Kean knows nothing of *pathos*—all his characters are characters of extremes. *Norval* is a being full of the intoxication of youthful joy, and its sunny visions dance before him in all their brightness. The sunrise of his fortune diffuses smiles over the face of all nature—it perfumes the hyacinth—it makes the daisy look brighter—and breathes a deeper and more odorous purple over the new-blown rose. A thousand hearts are swelling in his bosom. “His hopes are of air, his desires of fire.” The whole of the play is a tissue of exulting sentiments, clothed in poetic diction—with little of energy about it, either of passion or action. Mr Kean made the character one sneer from beginning to end—forgetting that sarcasm is an arti-

ficial expression of feeling, learned by communication with the world, and therefore a thing of which *Norval* could know nothing. But Mr K. "is nothing, if not sarcastical." There is a perpetual watching for epigrammatic points—for passages to surprise the audience into applause, by passing at once from familiarity to energy—"from lively to severe." There is a perpetual reaching at effect—and an evident artifice and air of study about everything. If he cannot find something in the play to fasten his style upon, he alters the character itself according to the counsel of his own will. If we had taken our conception of *Norval* from Mr Kean, we should have fancied him some villain that had no excuse for being so, instead of a youth radiant with grace and dignity, and swelling with noble aspirations. He looked, in short, rather more like a compound of *Luke Frugal*, and *Richard the Third*, than anything else that we can fancy. But all Mr Kean's characters are compounds of a few such elements. We should however add, that Mr Kean was received with abundant applause by an audience seemingly prepared to admire the most extravagant of his *extravaganzas*.

And here is the earlier defence on the moral score :

DEFENCE OF KEAN

31st March, 1816

A chasm has been produced in the amusements of this Theatre by the accident which has happened to Mr Kean. He was to have played the *Duke of Milan* on Tuesday, but as he had not come to the Theatre at the time of the drawing up of the curtain, Mr Rae came forward to propose another tragedy, *Douglas*. To this the audience did not assent, and wished to wait. Mr Kean, however, not appearing, nor any tidings being heard of him, he was at length given up, and two farces substituted in his stead. Conjectures and rumours were afloat; and it was not till the next day that it was discovered that Mr Kean having dined a few miles in the country, and returning at a very quick pace to keep his engagements at the Theatre, he was thrown out of his gig, and had his arm dislocated, besides being stunned and very much bruised with the fall. On this accident a grave morning paper is pleased to be

facetious. It observes that this is a very *serious* accident; that actors in general are liable to *serious* accidents; that the late Mr Cooke used to meet with *serious* accidents; that it is a sad thing to be in the way of such accidents; and that it is to be hoped that Mr Kean will meet with no more *serious* accidents. It is to be hoped that he will not—nor with any such profound observations upon them, if they should happen. Next to that spirit of bigotry which in a neighbouring country would deny actors Christian burial after death, we hate that cant of criticism, which slurs over their characters while living with a half-witted jest. Actors are accused as a profession of being extravagant and intemperate. While they are said to be so as a piece of common cant, they are likely to continue so. But there is a sentence in Shakespeare which should be stuck as a label in the mouth of the beadles and whippers-in of morality:—“The web of our life is a mingled yarn: our virtues would be proud if our vices whipped them not, and our vices would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues.” With respect to the extravagance of actors, as a traditional character, it is not to be wondered at: they live from hand to mouth; they plunge from want to luxury; they have no means of making money *breed*, and all professions that do not live by turning money into money, or have not a certainty of accumulating it in the end by parsimony, spend it. Uncertain of the future, they make sure of the present moment. This is not unwise. Chilled with poverty, steeped in contempt, they sometimes pass into the sunshine of fortune, and are lifted to the very pinnacle of public favour, but even there cannot calculate on the continuance of success, but are, “like the giddy sailor on the mast, ready with every blast to topple down into the fatal bowels of the deep!” Besides, if the young enthusiastic who is smitten with the stage, and with the public as a mistress, were naturally a close hunk he would become or remain a city clerk, instead of turning player. Again, with respect to the habit of convivial indulgence, an actor to be a good one must have a great spirit of enjoyment in himself, strong impulses, strong passions, and a strong sense of pleasure, for it is his business to imitate the passions and to communicate pleasure to others. A man of genius is not a machine. The neglected actor may be excused if he drinks oblivion of his disappointments; the

successful one, if he quaffs the applause of the world, and enjoys the friendship of those who are the friends of the favourites of fortune, in draughts of nectar. There is no path so steep as that of fame; no labour so hard as the pursuit of excellence. The intellectual excitement inseparable from those professions which call forth all our sensibility to pleasure and pain, requires some corresponding physical excitement to support our failures, and not a little to allay the ferment of the spirits, attendant on success. If there is any tendency to dissipation beyond this in the profession of a player, it is owing to the state of public opinion, which paragraphs like the one we have alluded to are not calculated to reform; and players are only not so *respectable* as a profession as they might be, because their profession is not *respected* as it ought to be. There is something, we fear, impertinent and uncalled-for in these remarks: the more so, as in the present instance, the insinuation which they were meant to repel is wholly unfounded. We have it on very good authority, that Mr Kean, since his engagement at Drury Lane, and during his arduous and uninterrupted exertions in his profession, has never missed a single rehearsal, nor been absent a minute beyond the time for beginning his part.¹

And here are two interesting notes:

DEATH OF TALMA

October 1826

At Paris, on the 19th instant, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, the celebrated French tragedian, Talma. He had for some time been suffering under a painful disorder in the intestines, from which there was no hope of recovery. He, however, preserved all his intellectual faculties to the last moment. He felt no acute pain, and only complained of having a cloud before his eyes. He perfectly recognised the friends around his bed, and on seeing Messrs Jouy, Arnault, and Dovilliers, he stretched out his arms, wept, and embraced them. He said to his

¹ Part of this article, from "Actors are accused" to "attendant on success," appears in Hazlitt's essay entitled *On Actors and Acting*, under the date Jan. 5th, 1817, without reference to Kean, and as a set of general reflections only.

nephew, "The physicians know nothing of my disease. Recommend them to open my body that it may be useful to my fellow creatures," and in a moment after he said, "*Let there be no Priests!* All I ask, not to be buried too soon." Some time before, he exclaimed, "What do they require of me, to make me abjure the art to which I owe all my glory, an art that I idolize? to deny the forty brightest years of my life, to separate my cause from that of my comrades and to acknowledge them to be infamous? Never!" This was spoken in allusion to repeated attempts which had been made, during his illness, by the Archbishop of Paris to see him, that he might *reconcile* him (as it is termed) to the Church. The priests were, in fact, in a dilemma. They could not, in common justice, allow to Talma what they were in the invariable practice of refusing to his comrades—namely, admit him without confession to the holy rights of the sepulchre. He was, however, so popular in Paris that they dreaded the uproar and scandal which their refusal would draw down on their heads. These the Archbishop endeavoured to evade by prevailing on Talma prior to his death, to show signs of repentance. They little knew the man they had to deal with. On hearing of their fears, he at once solved the difficulty by desiring that his body might at once be carried to the burial ground, without entering any church, or requiring any duties from the priesthood. It is supposed that at least eighty thousand persons attended his remains to the cemetery of Père la Chaise.

NOTE ON TALMA

31st December, 1826

The late M. Talma's father was a respectable dentist in Frith Street, Soho Square. His name was on an oval white enamelled plate on the door. M. Talma, the son, was one of the junior scholars at the Soho Square Academy, in and prior to the year 1781. Mr Holman was at the academy at the same time. It was the custom there to get up and perform plays previous to the holidays, to which performances the friends of the scholars were invited, and M. Talma and Mr Holman performed the principal characters; they always received much applause, and this, no

doubt, induced them both to take to the stage—M. Talma was then about 16 years of age, and was always considered to have been born in England. He was a youth of a very lively turn, and considered one of the best classical scholars at the time. As there have been doubts respecting the country which gave him birth, this communication may probably decide it.

Dec. 18 Glyn Philpot's death announced. Only last week *Saturday*. the Redfern Gallery had a fine exhibition of his latest work. I should have liked to buy one of those studies of "negro pathos," but the cheapest was priced at £600. The *Times* goes as far as to say of Philpot that even at his most urbane there was evident, under the surface, a taste for the macabre. This is a change from the unvarying falsity of obituary notices. When Lady X. died recently the papers described her as a patroness of all the arts and a pattern of all the virtues. When I asked Monty about her he said, "She was a thundering good sort who gave encouragement to a lot of young artists. They say she threw a decanter at D. H. Lawrence because he refused to kiss her."

The one thing that everybody knows about the dead is never mentioned. A brilliant statesman dies of drink, a fine classical scholar leaves behind him the world's most comprehensive library of pornographic books, this famous actor has hardly enough grey matter to get on a bus, sexual impotence induces that gentle writer's whimsy—and nothing is said. In this matter I side with Rachel, who could write, "Si les faiseurs de chroniques scandaleuses s'avisaient un jour de reproduire ma vie, contez-la dans toute sa simplicité." And I seem to remember that Sainte-Beuve laid it down: "Quand on fait une étude sur un homme considérable, il faut oser tout voir, tout regarder, et au moins tout indiquer."¹

¹ From Boswell's *Johnson*: "Talking of biography, I said, in writing a life, a man's peculiarities should be mentioned, because they mark his character. JOHNSON. 'Sir, there is no doubt as to peculiarities: the question is, whether a man's vices should be mentioned; for instance, whether it should be mentioned that Addison and Parnell drank too freely: for people will probably more easily indulge in drinking from knowing this; so that more

Dec. 21 "It never rains but it pours" applies to good *Tuesday*. things as well as bad. During the week-end I am presented with three delightful books about the old theatre. Baliol Holloway gives me a copy of the old Bancroft *Memoirs*, and Major Jones Mrs Kendal's *Dramatic Opinions*, published in 1890. The third is an extraordinary gift from a total stranger. This is the *Memoirs* of Clairon, on whom George Moore in *Impressions and Opinions* has a much too short essay. Clairon, who was born in 1728 and died in 1808, wrote this book towards the end of her life, and my copy, which is a translation, was published in 1800 by O. G. and J. Robinson, of Paternoster Row. The two volumes might, in the Charing Cross Road, fetch tuppence; they are worth a small fortune to me. The donor writes, "If you know, would you be good enough to tell me who the lady was? And had she any excuse for putting herself on paper?" I am replying that Clairon's real name was Claire-Josèphe-Hippolyte Leyris de la Tudi, and that she had every excuse. Rummaging in these *Memoirs* is a joy, and I take a wicked glee in recognising the jealousy with which Clairon guarded the word 'great' as applied to actors: "Since the theatre has existed, we can only reckon three actors capable of performing the very first-rate characters. These are Baron, Dufrenè, and Lekain."

And I itch to send the following to half a dozen of our modern petits-maîtres:

Those who perform the principal male characters should be above the middle size, and neither corpulent nor lean; a corpulent man appears vulgar on the stage, and a lean one insignificant. He should be well made, and have no

ill may be done by the example, than good by telling the whole truth.' Here was an instance of his varying from himself in talk; for when Lord Hailes and he sat one morning calmly conversing in my house at Edinburgh, I well remember that Dr Johnson maintained, that 'If a man is to write *A Panegyrick*, he may keep vices out of sight; but if he professes to write *A Life*, he must represent it really as it was': and when I objected to the danger of telling that Parnell drank to excess, he said, that 'it would produce an instructive caution to avoid drinking, when it was seen, that even the learning and genius of Parnell could be debased by it.' And in the *Hebrides* he maintained, as appears from my *Journal*, that a man's intimate friend should mention his faults, if he writes his life."

apparent defect; he should combine an appearance of strength with elegance. If he is handsome, so much the better, provided his beauty is masculine: delicate features would be a defect. . . . Small features lose all their effect at a very little distance; a small eye may be arch and lively, but never can be commanding; a mouth that falls inwards can never express grief; and fair hair is unbecoming on the stage.

Dec. 28 Brother Edward's Christmas present is a half-*Thursday*. sheet of notepaper with the quotation: "Like the patriarch who ran from the altar in St Sophia to his stable, in all his pontificals, to see a colt newly fallen from his beloved and much-valued mare, Phorbante." (Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living and Dying*.)

Dec. 24 During the last three days have attended 2 cir-
Friday. cuses, 2 pantomimes, and 2 plays. Yesterday the pantomime at the Adelphi started at 2 sharp and went on till 7.30! Rushed home, dressed, had no dinner, and got to the Vaudeville by 8.15, at which time Ronnie Squire's new play was announced to begin. Instead I found an entertainer at the piano!!! At the Lyceum one knows what to expect. From 2 till 3 the plot; from 3 till 4 the ballet; from 4 onwards the comics. This enables one to time one's arrival, which in my case to-day was half-past three-ish. Having laughed myself silly over Albert Burdon, Clarkson Rose, and the O'Gormans in a series of side-splitting skits and burlesques I left round about six.

One of the animals at the Lyceum was exactly like Flaubert's Catoblepas in the *Tentation*. This was a "buffle noir, avec une tête de porc tombant jusqu'à terre, et rattachée à ses épaules par un cou mince, long et flasque comme un boyau vidé." He was "vautré tout à plat; et ses pieds disparaissent sous l'énorme crinière à poils durs qui lui couvre le visage." And the brute said to the Saint: "Gras, mélancholique, farouche, je reste continuellement à sentir sous mon ventre la chaleur de la boue. Mon crâne est tellement lourd qu'il m'est impossible de le porter. Je le roule

autour de moi, lentement; et la mâchoire entr'ouverte, j'arrache avec ma langue les herbes vénéneuses arrosées de mon haleine. Une fois, je me suis dévoré les pattes sans m'en apercevoir."

Christmas Day. This began by being brilliantly fine and sunny. At eleven o'clock Lady Macbeth's blanket of the dark had nothing on the fog at Belsize Park, which by eleven-thirty rivalled the dunnest smoke of hell. It was so thick that taxis declined to leave their ranks. As everybody had gone on leave, I was marooned and should have starved had Fred not left a note saying I should find a cold turkey in the kitchen cupboard. Spent the day improvising a wine-cellar for a dozen bottles of brandy, being a Christmas present from Lee Shubert, tidying up the diary, playing two of the more Ibsenite Sibelius symphonies, and reading Matthew Arnold. In the evening the fog cleared and I was able to keep my engagement to dine at Monty's, which I have done every Christmas but one for ten years.

An excellent party, which it was bound to be considering the wit of the host and the blending of the guests—Herschel Johnson, a member of the American diplomatic corps, Maurice Ingram, now back from Rome, John Deverell the actor, Pat Kevan, a very promising young player, Alan Dent, that very promising young dramatic critic, and me. Monty is becoming higher than highbrow. At the Christmas party six years ago he would not have Logan Pearsall Smith because La Rochefoucauld is better, and to-night Matthew Arnold was dismissed as a bastard Milton. Herschel told us about a friend who heard the Dowager Empress of China interrupt a political conversation to say, "That reminds me—I must have Lotus Fragrance thrown down the well." After dinner we tackled the *Times* General Knowledge Paper, which is becoming too snobbish. Too many questions of the "What Old Wykehamist is whipper-in to the Chiltern Hundreds?" order. Wound up with games.

Afterwards Jock would have me drink a glass of brandy in his flat. This is the first time in eleven years that I have



One of these is Julian Phillipson

been bidden to any of Jock's abodes. We clomb to an eyrie in Covent Garden consisting of three rooms and a 'loggia'—a bedroom-kitchen, spare and spotless, a library with shelves much better furnished than my own and including a magnificent set of Steevens's edition of Shakespeare with Fuseli's plates, and a music-room with a superb collection of gramophone records. Delightful playbills and old pictures, with one of Malibran picked up at Southend and which Jock had not dared to disclose to me on jealous grounds. The 'loggia' is closed in winter; in summer I gather that it is the resort of Covent Garden's dart champions. Jock insisted, at five in the morning, on my hearing a Mozart symphony unperformed in this country, and I could only get away by pleading that I had to-day's diary to write up. To which 'alibi' he was forced to yield!

Dec. 26 At Mills's Circus there is an extraordinary performance by some performing cats. Pierre Loti is our authority here:

Les chats ont des petites âmes ombrageuses, des petites âmes de câlinerie, de fierté et de caprice, difficilement pénétrables, ne se révélant qu'à certains privilégiés, et que rebute le moindre outrage, ou quelquefois la déception la plus légère. Leur intelligence égale au moins celle des chiens, dont ils n'ont jamais d'ailleurs les obséquieuses soumissions, non plus que la ridicule importance, ni la révoltante grossièreté. Ce sont des bêtes élégantes et patriciennes, les chiens, au contraire, quelle que soit leur condition sociale, gardent des malpropretés de parvenus et demeurent irrémédiablement communs.

Dec. 27 Did a lot of tidying up in view of proposed move *Monday*. to a bigger flat, my work having outgrown the present one. I hardly dare open the door lest a parcel of review books should fall out. Spent the entire day going through old papers till the dustbin was full. Made some extraordinary discoveries, largely grotesque, but one or two that I found moving. Let me tabulate:

1. Set of extremely lugubrious verses composed by me at the age of five.

2. School group taken in 1887 and showing me standing next to Fred Kenyon, afterwards known as Gerald Cumberland.

3. School report for the summer term of 1888, showing that I was Present 81 times, Absent (illness) 5 times, Late 0 times!! Position in form: 1st in English, Latin, History, Geography, but only 3rd in French, 7th in Algebra, and 9th in Arithmetic. In the following term I fell to 7th in Geography, but was 1st in French, where I remained.

4. Letter from Brother Edward, at the age of eleven, to me at Giggleswick:

My sore throat is much better and I have been able to go for a walk. I wonder if you have such green trees as we have now. Surrey is playing Hampshire. Surrey goes in first and makes 494. Abel 46, M. Read 41, W. W. Read 80, Lockwood 100, Henderson 105. Then poor Hampshire goes in and as the scores are so little I will not detail them. Lancashire is going to play Oxford University. The team is Messrs S. M. Crosfield and A. T. Kemble, with Baker, Barlow, Briggs, Mold, Sugg, A. Ward, Watson, Paul and Yates. The influenza is something dreadful, hundreds of people are dying around us. Mr Birch came as usual on Friday afternoon. Sydney had drawn a face leaving out the ear, mouth and hair, and Mr Birch said it was charming, sweet, and there could not be anything better. He gave us two flat irons to draw that day, one ten lbs and the other the billiard-table one but we only drew the billiard-table one. How many runs have you made, how many fellows have you bowled, and how many chaps have you stumped? You ought to bat, bowl and stump pretty well after our little pitch at Skipton that you did such wonders on. No, no flattery, you ought to be able to do something like Crosfield that you pretended to be. . . .

5. Letter to Edward from Sarah Bernhardt, presented by him to me as a Christmas present some years ago. The envelope has no stamp because it was given, May tells me, to my mother to give Edward, Sarah at the same time scrabbling

in her bag and producing ten pounds. The piece which Sarah was to have recited was Rostand's *La Brouette*, a little poem for which she had commissioned Edward to write a piano accompaniment :

MON CHER AGATE,

Je reçois à l'instant un mot de la Maison Royale me demandant de dire devant Leurs Majestés ' La Prière pour Nos Ennemis ' dont je disais quelques vers dans la petite pièce, ' Du Théâtre au Champs d'Honneur.' Je crois que c'est notre Ambassadeur qui leur a parlé de ces vers. Je ne puis refuser. Donc voilà notre ' Brouette ' reculée ; mais je la dirai dans un autre concert ! Ne vous dérangez donc pas ce matin, mon cher Edouard. Je vous envoie avec tous mes remerciements mes excuses pour le petit retard involontaire et mes grandes amitiés.

SARAH BERNHARDT

6. Letter from Allan Monkhouse dated Nov. 14, 1924, after the London production of *The Hayling Family* :

Meadow Bank
Disley
Cheshire

DEAR J.E.A.,

You'll think it queer but I haven't seen what you said about *The Hayling Family*. I've been in bed for three weeks with some return of my old trouble. As usual they're all kindness and consideration at the office and I can do a bit of work. But I can't get any work of my own done. Lack of energy and invention and some discouragement.

I should like to see what you said about *The H. Family* : I received cuttings of the daily papers and then my press cutting subscription ran out and I had told them before that I wasn't renewing it. The dailies were almost uniformly down on it and, if I may say so of your colleagues, almost uniformly idiotic. I didn't seem to want any more but I thought the *S. Times* would somehow come my way, though it hasn't. There was nothing to show what was wrong with the play. These dramatic critics are, of course, experts of a sort. They are men of the world who may know a success when they see it. They don't want to go into anything. They said that the last act was ridiculous,

preposterous, farcical melodrama. They all thought that the play was written to display Hayling. Not one perceived that the three young people were the play, that John pushed his idealism to a tragical and almost monstrous extreme, that this broke their unity, that the play poised for a moment on Bobby's "I don't know what to do," that the intolerable strain of the rupture is mitigated or exalted by the last line.

But of course I see that I haven't fitted the play for an audience, unless it be a very exceptional one. It's the first play I wrote, barring two 1 actors, and in my inexperience I've left too much implicit rather than explicit. The implications seem clear enough to me, but the play is evidently more obscure than I thought. I never have accepted your contention that I'm a closet playwright. All my plays that I've seen acted have been stage plays. Ivor Brown, in a letter, told me you said it should have been a novel. I have sometimes thought of making it into a novel, but I'm afraid that this would merely amount to padding essentials. I think the trouble is that the last act is too much for any company that isn't composed exclusively of great tragedians! From what I heard I don't think I have any serious cause for complaint against the actors.

However, I've written one successful play—*The Grand Cham's Diamond*. I get an application from amateurs about it nearly every day. Dean was to have done it before another play but these damned managers never do what they say they will. Another book! Bravo! And many thanks.

Your proposal to come for a week-end is received with acclamation. Rachel says: "Make him come." But I think it would be best to defer it a little. I intend to get into better form soon. We have family assemblages in my bedroom but we'd like to improve on that.

Ever yours,

A. N. M.

P.S. (Parting Shot). I don't think those London fellows know what a family is.

7. The *second* letter which I received from Jock before meeting him face to face. The first, a short note handed to

my servant, Freddie Webster, to be passed on to me in bed, is given in *Ego*, p. 91. Here is the second letter :

21st Sept., 1926

This book I handed to your man three weeks ago, with the entreaty that he might ask you to peruse it. Two days later, he returned it to me describing his master as "up to the neck in work," and saying that I should return in three weeks. As I am very anxious to be up even to the waist in similar employment, I beg to return the book for your consideration. Can you not kindly recommend me, in writing, to some one? Or will you not kindly scribble some advice or some remarks opposite some of these notices? I have about sufficient wherewithal for another three weeks' existence in London. The past three I spent on tramp in Hardy's Wessex—intensely enjoying my varied experiences. And I have returned to London—lacking all influence but my own—with no other ambition than to conjugate in practice and in the first person singular the two verbs 'to write' and 'to starve.' Would you tell me, meanwhile and immediately, where Grub Street is? I want to find lodging there and I am all 'moithered' in this vast city.

Expectantly and youthfully yours,

ALAN DENT

8. Hundreds of iron-throated bills with a whisper of receipts.

9. Statements of 'J.A.'s Financial Position' dated 1921, 1927, and 1932, all in Pip's best manner and with plenty of that hero's Margin. I note that as income increased so too did indebtedness. Likewise Margin. Pure Dickens!

Dec. 28 Marie Tempest having given me a lovely piece
Tuesday. of jade and to Jock a Chinese god in a temple, we
wired her: "Endlessly, O Jewel of Asia, we
strew almond blossom before your invisible feet."

Sent off cheques to the value of £519. There is now not a tradesman, petty or otherwise, except my tailor (who would scorn to be paid up in full) to whom I owe a bean! I feel that it ought to be written of me as of Balzac's Maxime de

Trailles: "Son carrossier, son tailleur, enfin tous ses créanciers firent des illuminations!"

Dec. 29 A letter:
Wednesday.

I am in the middle of your *Ego*.

About the "compulsional neuroses"—I am exactly the same. Mine started when I was ten, during the Great War. If I didn't get to my front door before the gate banged behind me the Germans would invade our little coastal town!

Now I have to count (in my head) "nine, ten, eleven" before I call at Bridge; my shoes have to be at least one inch apart when I go to bed; when reading the title of a film I mustn't let my eyelids blink before the film proper begins; etc, etc, etc. Of course, it isn't "the Germans" now; just a nameless "something" that will bring me ill! Yet if you knew me you wouldn't think me any madder than the next one!

By the way, the Germans never did come, and if you can only NOT re-read the last sentences, and NOT go back to turn out the light that is already out, *nothing happens*. Strange, but it doesn't!

Dec. 30 Peter Page, recovered from his illness, went to
Thursday. the Adelphi pantomime under his own steam.

New Year's Eve Jock, who normally spends Hogmanay in
Friday. Scotland, astonished me to-day by remaining perversely sober. It is arranged, however, that I am not to see him to-morrow, when I had, at last, hoped to see him drunk.

Spent the morning choosing the decorations for my new house—No. 10, Fairfax Road, South Hampstead. Have given notice to terminate leases here, at Kensington Gardens Square, and at the bungalow.

Lunched with Jock at the Ivy, where I made out my annual table of work done during the year. The previous two years have shown:

1985	555,000 words
1986	505,000 ,,

The figures for this year are :

<i>Sunday Times</i>	100,000 words
<i>Tatler</i>	60,000 „
<i>Daily Express</i>	80,000 „
Pseudonym No. 1	60,000 „
Pseudonym No. 2	85,000 „
<i>New York Herald-Tribune</i>	10,000 „
<i>Ego 3</i>	98,000 „
Odd articles	20,000 „
<hr/>	
	508,000 words

By the way, I have a dreadful story about Pseudonym 8, which I dropped at the beginning of the year. Jock was away, I had entirely overlooked the weekly contribution for this paper, and there they were screaming down the telephone for my review of a play for which they had prepared a special photo-block. And it was a piece I hadn't seen ! Promising the article in 8 hours' time, I sent S.O.S.'s to George Mathew and B. telling them to drop everything and leave everybody in the lurch and send me by special messenger 700 words each, one on the play and the other on the acting. Both behaved like Trojans. The two batches of copy were at my place in just over the hour, I rushed both off to a typist without reading them, and delivered the article, still unread, to the paper on the stroke of time. Later in the day I got a wire from the editor : "Congratulations stop you are at top of your form stop no two men in London could have done it."

It is now 9 P.M., and I am going to dress, call on the Stanley Rubins, the Mark Hambourgs, and the Moiseiwitsches. After which I am to go to supper with the most generous heart in London—Madeleine Cohen. A good year, in which I have never tuned in to a French station without receiving a blast of muck, or to a German one without being enchanted. This moves me to record that while I adore, to use the cant phrase, the language, literature, and painting

of the French, German music almost persuades me to tolerate Nazis.

I shall always look back on 1937 as the year in which I attained the age of sixty, visited America, and paid my debts.

1938

New Year's Day. My relations with my bank continue to be friendly.

Jan. 2 Sunday. Jimmie Horsnell much too good in to-day's *Observer*: "As Mr Robey enters from the wings his eyes command the house like the blazing headlights of a car rounding the corner of a night-dark road." And this is the *Observer's* second string! Looked through my stuff in the *S.T.* about the *Dream* and found it fair. But why didn't I say that Robert Helpmann's Oberon, in glittering black, is first cousin to Sarah Bernhardt's Hamlet?

On the way to lunch discovered good omen for the new house. This is that the grocer over the way is called C. P. Scott.

Lunched at Gennaro's with George Mathew and Ted Elliott. Got back in time to hear the Dean of St Paul's attempt a wireless answer to the question Zophar the Naamathite put to Job: "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Hopes were dashed when in the second sentence the Dean said he did not propose to inflict on us "a close chain of reasoning." What else, in heaven's name, did he suppose we wanted? So we had all the old sentimental stuff about sunsets and daffodils. Ted said, "It's like talking about a flag-pole without mentioning it." Discourses by eminent divines leave me wondering what it is in a divine that makes him eminent.

Read a good deal of George Jean Nathan's new book, *The Morning After the First Night*. The combination of physical fragility and intellectual ferocity suggests a porcelain battleship cracking under the weight of its own broadsides. He

is a dear fellow who mixes up sense and nonsense with a pierrot-like *insouciance*.

Jan. 8 Maugham's *The Summing Up*, p. 105, line 7.
Monday. "French is the common language of educated men."

Jan. 5 The English instinctively admire any man
Wednesday. who has no talent and is modest about it.

Jan. 9 Scotland bound. The idea is to deliver four lectures to the good folk of Glasgow and a talk to the Women of Edinburgh. Take the relief train, which gets in 1½ hours later. But it is also 1½ hours emptier, which makes for comfort. Read Damon Runyon's new book right through, and afterwards play picquet with B., who wants to get back the twenty-five shillings he lost to me on the boat coming from New York. I win a further thirteen-and-sixpence.

The hotel is vast. My room reeks faintly of lavender; B.'s, on the station side, smells of luggage. We discover a really first-class restaurant, which, however, is too hot, at least for my taste, though it might suit one of Runyon's dolls forty per cent. in and sixty per cent. out of an evening gown. Only I don't see any dolls, and the guys I do see are a hundred per cent. inside their lounge-suits.

Jan. 10 Stroll in a thick drizzle as far as Sauchiehall
Monday. Street. Edgware Road without the glamour. No taxis, and am told these only come out at night. Walk back to hotel in increasing drizzle. Hotel porter tells me pubs in this dump shut at ten and last train leaves at nine-forty.

First lecture, at Trinity Church, goes extremely well. Audience more alert than in England and gets my points before I make them. Am entertained to supper by one D. R. Anderson, who has with him A. C. Trotter, editor of the *Scottish Daily Express*, Robins Millar, author of that good

play *Thunder in the Air*, young Neville Berry, who is Welsh, and the Rev. H. S. McClelland, Glasgow's *liaison* officer between Church and Stage. Can these Scots talk, or can they! They talk at, over, round, and through one, but never *to* one. Anderson's talk is as resistless as a glacier; you feel that a waistcoat button is in slow descent of the tablecloth. Had any member of this Scots quartet flourished fifty years ago Stevenson must have included him in his famous "Talk and Talkers."

Presently I throw myself into the conversational breach with a remark about James Bridie, and I hear this:

A. You'll no' deny there are dull passages in *Hamlet*?

McC. Man, it's full of dull passages.

A. Were ye bored at any minute of Bridie's *Black Eye*?

McC. Man, I was no' a wee bit bored.

A. Varra weel, then!

Which, of course, is the 1988 equivalent of "Whaur's your Wullie Shakespeare noo?"

Jan. 11 Bridie gives me lunch at the Arts Club. I ask
Tuesday. what Scots think of Barrie. He says, "When they revive one of his plays people go to it!"

Find the Paisley audience a bit sticky. Perhaps this is because the room is insufficiently lighted, which depresses me. To cheer me up after semi-flop B. suggests some Glasgow night-life. This turns out to mean the top box at a charity midnight-matinée in a music hall called the Metro-pole, where B. and I are the only men not wearing caps. At this height only one comedian strikes me as funny. This is George West; he gives an impression of an oaf doing his first bit of courting.

Jan. 12 Trotter throws luncheon party in my honour.
Wednesday. Spend the afternoon at the stud-farm of R. R. Speir, a great Hackney enthusiast and the United Kingdom's biggest dealer in show ponies.

Lecture at Newlands more successful. Tell the taxi-driver

to fill up car and self. When I ask what I owe him for drinks he says, "I didna' tak' a drink. I went instead to your lecture. Some of it was no' bad." Thus does Scotch history repeat itself, it being some hundred and fifty years since the gallery-boy's "That's no' sae bad!" was hurled at Mrs Siddons.

Jan. 18 Hearing the country round Peebles is pretty—
Thursday. which Glasgow isn't—we take that road to Edinburgh, queen of capitals, which has all my allegiance. Being early, hang about to take a gander at our hostesses. B., who has got Runyon on the brain, says he will lay plenty of 6 to 5 these dames are such as will let a guy die of thirst. So encouraged, I suggest the local Good Time Charley's, where we have a couple of shots, and what with one thing and another, including the stewed veal and cold Edinburgh water, I get all mixed up in my address and say of an actress that, though she has plenty of poise and presence, she doesn't go off her hocks like a little mare I saw at Speir's. This gives offence to an old doll who looks like she has a good seat at the Coronation, and says in a crumpled voice she dislikes my address more than somewhat. I do not say much in reply to the old tomato, as I hear the guy with her is the Kyle of Bute. Also I don't get my cheque, which is to be sent on to my address in London, owing, says B., to their figuring that I'm probably not James Agate at all.

Having a free evening, we discover that the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company is here, and go to *The Pirates of Penzance*. Am introduced to Durward Lely, the original Nanki-Poo, now a hale old gentleman of eighty-six, who tells me that it was at his suggestion that Sullivan put a hornpipe into *Ruddigore*, for which he has been cursed by tenors ever since.

To supper at Frank Waters', a finance controller in the newspaper world, and much too open of countenance to look anything of the sort. Married to Joan Maude, actress and daughter of Nancy Price. Lives in a lovely and exquisitely

furnished house. On the walls is an old print of Hackneys running in a field. I can't help coveting this.

Jan. 14 As I am lying in bed the porter enters with a *Friday*. parcel. It is the old print!

Motor to Greenock to talk to the Greenock Philosophical Society, and B. says it would take more than somewhat of philosophy to live here. This is perhaps because it is pelting with rain and we cannot see as far as the Clyde, which is only ten yards away. But I like these Greenock philosophers, who give me a big hello. The hall is hung with pictures, including one by a young Greenockite called Alex Galt, who is going to be very good indeed. It is his first picture. Am getting the impression that Scotland is a land of intrinsic culture and possessed of a high degree of civic consciousness. We still have the same taxi-driver, who, when we tell him we are leaving to-morrow, shakes our hands and wishes us *bon voyage*. His bearing is full of unspoken Burns; what his handshake is saying is that even if he drives a taxi a man's a man for a' that.

Jan. 15 In the train. Have said good-bye to Scotland *Saturday*. for the time being. We have had lunch, I have written my diary for the week, and B. wants his revenge at picquet. He has it in his noggin to get back the thirteen and sixpence and a bit more to pay off the overhead around his joint, such as rent. A plague on this Runyonese! I must take a run-out powder on it.

Jan. 18 The builder who is doing up the new house, *Tuesday*. seeing a portrait of Ego, told me that as a young man round about 1899 he used to drive Jersey Lily and Lord Pick-'Em-Up single, pair, and tandem for Mrs Goad. I showed him an old photograph of those two ponies in Geoffrey Bennett's *Famous Harness Horses*, and he was greatly moved. It would be dramatic to say he burst into tears. But he didn't.

Monty has kindly given me a magnificent Chirico for the

drawing-room. It is a red horse attended on the usual Trojan shore by two warriors in armour and a groom without a face. It will be amusing to have this and Gladys Calthrop's pastiche facing one another. Monty also approves my *Head of a Negro* picked up for seven-and-sixpence in a dingy little furniture shop near the Caledonian Market. It was rolled up and pinned on the back of a chair. Have had it stretched, framed, and varnished, but not otherwise touched. Unsigned.

Jan. 20 Saw Fred Dehn off to South America. The last *Thursday*. time I did this was thirty-five years ago. At lunch he told me how Paul, my godson, had been taken ill at Oxford, where his brother is at Worcester College. How the doctor diagnosed appendicitis and rushed him off to hospital, and how, on the way, Paul insisted on looking in at a party and, without telling them about the operation, giving his new revue number, *Love Me Three Times a Day after Meals*. Pretty plucky.

Jan. 22 Last night sat up at the club till three o'clock *Saturday*. with Moiseiwitsch, Duggy Furber, and George Bishop to listen in to the Braddock-Farr fight, which Braddock seemed to win by streets. It is obvious that Farr has no real punch. When I told Jock, who is very Gaelic these days, about Moiseiwitsch sitting up he said: "Does thon man think thir twa wad sit up to heed his piano?"

Jan. 23 Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra with Furtwängler. *Sunday*. Schubert's 'Rosamunde,' Beethoven No. 5, Pfitzner's 'Käthe von Heilbron' Overture (a marzipan of Strauss made with skim-milk), the Prelude and Liebestod, and 'Eulenspiegel.' During the Liebestod a young couple sitting in the front of the stalls and touchingly oblivious of the great audience melted into one another. I felt that the young man was paraphrasing Claude Melnotte:

And we will smile
To think how poorly eloquence of sound
Translates the poetry of hearts like ours.

I think I never heard such exquisite string-playing, but the brass horrid. Very good seats given me by Ernest Helme when I supped with him on Thursday. E. H. used to live in the nineties; he has now gone back to the seventies. Told me that when the Witch said to Irving, "All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter," the great actor's face shone with a malignant covetousness that was dreadful to look on.

Jan. 24 Tony Baerlein is back from Spain. I gather that *Monday.* the war was not such good fun as he expected.

Most of the friends he made there have been executed since, and he has sold less than 5 per cent. of his films. The two sides are now so close to one another politically that there's nothing left for them to fight about. This means that the end of the war is further off than ever.

Jan. 25 Pavia was in great form to-day: "Every good *Tuesday.* deed brings its own punishment."

Jan. 26 I hear from a source which ought to be re-
Wednesday. liable that the Government is nervous about war in April. In which case publication of *Ego 3* will have to be deferred till it is all over. It appears that the Navy cannot guarantee to defend Hong Kong and the Suez Canal and look after the North Sea. Any two, they say, but not three. As against an alliance between Japan, Italy, and Germany, that age-old cocotte France will not say what she will do, we do not know what use Russia would be, and America is indifferent. All the staff at the Foreign Office had their gas-masks tried on last week, and spent some time in a gas-filled chamber. Our Air Force is said to be pretty good, though reprisals seem to me to me mere baby-talk. If Germany is as ruthless as I believe, she will sacrifice Berlin for London in the way the chess-player with the stronger position will force an exchange of queens. I have not the slightest interest in any of the foregoing, except, of course, in respect of the deferred publication.

Jan. 27 Thursday. The exhibition at the Zwemmer Gallery of 170 paintings by 30 girls from Langford Grove School, Essex, has put the cat among the pigeons. The artists are from nine to seventeen years of age. Monty Shearman's view is that their pictures are just 'not right.' He was quite annoyed when I said that if he saw one of them at Rosensomething's in Paris priced at 10,000 francs he would fall for it. But then I have not had quite the same faith in Monty's infallibility since he would not have Christopher Wood when he was going cheap. To do M. justice, he will not have him now that his canvases are fetching six and eight hundred guineas. By the way, Rex Nankivell of the Redfern Galleries tells me they are spending £1000 on the catalogue of the forthcoming Christopher Wood sale. Murger's "Give me now what my monument will cost!" applies here with a vengeance.

I have bought three of the children's pictures. *Out with the Puckeridge*, by Lucinda Turnbull, because of the subject; *Coronation*, by Clare Ritchie, because it is very witty to give no more than the empty roadway and the hedge of guardsmen through which the artist peeped; *Self-portrait*, by Elizabeth Carr, because I think it is a good picture.

Jan. 28 Friday. Have made an arrangement with a doctor friend whereby every week I send him two of my review books against two of his free samples. This week while he is absorbing two nauseating novels I am imbibing Incretone, a preventive of senile decay, and Agocholine, "the most active cholagogue obtainable," whose function is drainage of the biliary tract. Next week he gets two dollops of fragrant bilge against cures for gout and gravel.

Feb. 1 Tuesday. The post brings an appeal from Our Dumb Friends' League. The dumb friend chosen to illustrate this is a snarling, open-mouthed, man-eating tiger which is obviously preparing to devour a nervous trainer with, probably, a wife and kids depending on his not being devoured.

Feb. 2 B.B.C. concert. Elgar No. 2. Judging from *Wednesday*. the number of Elgar 'finger-prints,' this work should obviously be called the "Scotland Yard" Symphony.

Feb. 6 Left Brighton about nine in brilliant sunshine, *Sunday*. but at Sutton ran into a fog. St Martin's Church full for the Irving Memorial Service, which was impressive. In the procession to the statue I walked with Violet Vanbrugh, who has become the perfect Gainsborough, and Cochran, looking a little tired after his American trip. Crowd very quiet and respectful. I tried to find somebody to lunch with, but couldn't, so in a mood of some desolation had a solitary meal at the Café Royal.

And now, as Fielding says, for a hint of what we can do in the sublime: to wit, my article in to-day's *Sunday Times*:

Hume having told Boswell that he was no more uneasy to think he should *not be* after this life, than that he *had not been* before he began to exist, Johnson thundered: "Sir, if he really thinks so, his perceptions are disturbed; he is mad. If he does not think so, he lies." If anybody thinks Irving was the greatest English actor of modern times and does not say so, he lies. If he does not think so, he is mad.

That Irving would be laughed at to-day is the parrot-cry of hop-o'-my-thumbs. In 1898 he put on *Becket*, and it would be easy to say that in 1935 he would have put on *Murder in the Cathedral*. But I do not think this is true. Irving was undoubtedly influenced by Tennyson's prestige, and to encourage a rising dramatist was never any part of his business. I think in 1935 he would have revived the *old* play and snubbed young playwright and young actor. This may be uncomplimentary to Irving, but I think it is true.

Mr Gordon Craig has said that, since it may be supposed some day that Irving was either a bravura or a quietist actor, he had better put it on record that he was neither, for the unshakable reason that Irving was a genius, and "a genius is both a quietist and a bravurista." "I will

“speak daggers to her, but use none,” said Hamlet. Lots of middling actors can speak daggers: I have never seen Irving’s equal at looking them. To-day your player comes on the stage with one look and keeps it, always with the exception of Charles Laughton, who can pull his face about in the way the street-merchant manipulates an india-rubber doll. But Irving *made* faces, and when he made one it was in granite. I have never forgotten, and to my dying day shall not forget, his expression when as Dante he saw Ugolino starving in his tower. He made faces for every part he played—macabre, jaunty, diabolical faces. He had a pathetic face, a saintly face, and a regal one: “The splendour falls on castle walls.” He had faces for everybody, for Mathias, Jingle, Louis XI, Dr Primrose, Corporal Brewster, Shylock, Robespierre.

Yet people would tell you that he was “always Irving.” And so he was, if they meant that in every part Irving played there was a hint of Mephistopheles. They said he never “acted.” Nor did he if by “acting” they meant pretending to be somebody else. Hear Max: “Irving could not impersonate. His voice, face, figure, port, were not transformable. But so fine was the personality to which they belonged that none cried shame when this or that part had to submit or be crushed by it. Intransformable, he was multi-radiant, though. He had, in action, a keen sense of humour—of sardonic, grotesque, fantastic humour. He had an incomparable power for eeriness, for stirring a dim sense of mystery; and not less masterly was he in evoking a sharp sense of horror. His dignity was magnificent in purely philosophic or priestly gentleness, or in the gaunt aloofness of philosopher or king. He could be benign with a tinge of malevolence, and arrogant with an undercurrent of sweetness. As philosopher or king, poet or prelate, he was matchless. One felt that if Charles the Martyr, Dante, Wolsey, were not precisely as he was, so much the worse for Wolsey, Dante, Charles the Martyr.”

Irving had more pathos than any player I have ever seen, and whether this was an emanation of the soul or a trick of the larynx does not seem to me to matter. Much has been written of the waves of magnetism, or whatever you like to call it, which in *The Bells* Irving sent over the footlights even before he had shaken the snow off his coat.

I would prefer to dwell upon the extraordinary pathos with which Mathias suggested the man tormented and conscience-stricken. For years nothing in the theatre haunted me so much as that first act's unhappiness. It filled the theatre so that there was nothing else left in the universe.

How would Irving have fared to-day? Could he *at any time* have tackled Ibsen's Borkman, Strindberg's Adolph, Tchekhov's Vershinin? I think not. Put him in the dingy Russian uniform of this last, and those three sisters, their visitors, and everybody in the little town, even Moscow itself, would have disappeared and left the world to darkness and Henry Irving. No; Irving is not thinkable in the great plays of to-day. I even venture to hold that he was a Shakespearean actor only on condition that it was Irving's Shakespeare rather than Shakespeare's that was being performed. Comparing the piano concertos of Brahms with those of Beethoven, the staunch classicists of fifty years ago said that they were not concertos but symphonies with pianoforte obbligati. Irving knew nothing about providing an obbligato to Shakespeare or anybody; he insisted on being the entire bag of tricks.

Ellen Terry, who was a more radiant actress than Fanny Kemble and a wittier diarist than Fanny Burney, has left what are easily the best descriptions of the outer man and the inner artist: "I have never seen in living man, or picture, such distinction of bearing. A splendid figure, and his face very noble. A superb brow; rather small dark eyes which can at moments become immense, and hang like a bowl of dark liquid with light shining through; a most refined curving Roman nose, strong and delicate in line, and *cut clean* (as all his features); a smallish mouth and full of the most wonderful teeth, even at 55; lips most delicate and refined—firm, firm, firm—and with a rare smile of the most exquisite beauty and quite-not-to-be-described kind. His hair is superb; beautiful in 1867, when I first met him, when it was blue-black like a raven's wing, it is even more splendid now (1895), when it is liberally streaked with white."

Yet Irving could never have said of Ellen: "Look how our partner's rapt!" For she was not rapt. There was no moment when her critical percipience about him was not busy. She was not blinded by his genius as an actor

to his defects as an artist: "He never admires the right thing." "Oddly enough, Henry was always attracted by fustian." And here are some bits found in a notebook after Ellen's death:

"His work, his work! He has always held his life and his death second to his work. When he dies, it will be because he is tired out. Now, double performances (Saturday mornings and evenings) oblige him to stimulate himself with wine, and at about midnight he looks like a corpse.

"He is a very *gentle* man, though not in the least a *tender* man.

"His illness has made him look queer. He is stouter, very grey, sly-looking, and more cautious than ever. Bother!

"A quite common young fellow in the company plays all the good parts which might befit Laurence, but H.I., thinking only of H.I., fancies L. an inch or so too tall to act with, so down goes L., and up goes himself!¹

"He has terrified me once or twice by his exhaustion and feebleness. Then he appears grateful to us all, for we *all* give him *all*. But when he gets a little better, anything so icy, indifferent, and almost contemptuous, I never saw."

And all the time she is noting the extreme beauty of his hands, and how he always makes them up a gipsy brown.

My father, who was a great theatre-goer, would not allow that Irving was a tragedian at all. In his view Macready, Phelps, Fechter, Barry Sullivan, Salvini, were all better tragedians. On the other hand, he held that as Jingle, and in purely melodramatic rôles like Mathias and Dubosc, Irving was unapproachable. What, in my view, was the matter with Irving's Shylock was that it was neither Jewish nor foreign. Indeed, I used to have the impression that he never really studied Shylock, and that the trial scene was just Becket and Wolsey stuck together. But I now know that I was wrong. I realise now that Irving's Shylock was a Sephardic Jew—that is, a Jew of Spanish-Portuguese descent, in contra-distinction to the Ashkenasic Jew of Eastern origin. It was this which

¹ I once saw Laurence Irving and his father together. It was in Manchester, and the boy played Christian to the old man's Mathias. H. I. was quite right. His son was too tall for him.

accounted for Shylock's nobility and stiffness. I admit Irving's weakness as to legs and diction. Nor was the voice good, and Wilde wrote the purest bosh when he ended his sonnet to Irving :

Thou trumpet set for Shakespeare's lips to blow.

Truth to tell, that trumpet was much nearer the wry-necked fife. Yet I say that Irving's natural deficiencies and wilful faults became him better than his virtues and graces have become any other actor of my time. He was unescapably and without qualification the greatest male player that I ever saw. He possessed not more talent than any other player, but talent of a totally different order. When I first saw him he had turned fifty, and I like to think I had enough schoolboy wit to go about proclaiming :

He above the rest,
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower; his form had not yet lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined, and th' excess
Of glory obscured.

The years passed, and

deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic though in ruin; sage he stood,
With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look
Drew audience and attention still as night. . . .

And would again to-day ! That is all that Milton and I have to say about Henry Irving.

Feb. 8 And here is my broadcast talk :

Tuesday.

To talk about Henry Irving is either unnecessary or hopeless. Anybody now listening who saw Irving does not need me to tell him what this greatest of actors was like. Nor can I hope even to jog memory, since recollection once burned into the brain needs no reviving. And it is, of course, hopeless to try to tell to-day's young people anything about acting. Even if our young people could allow

the possibility of an actor greater than Mr Robert Taylor I should still despair of creating for them any image of Irving.

It was not that Irving had more talent than your modern actor. He had a different order of talent. He had that something about him which made you rather watch Irving wrong than any other actor right.

Mr Max Beerbohm has written of Irving: "His magnetism was intense and unceasing. What exactly magnetism is I don't know. It may be an exhalation of the soul or it may be a purely physical thing—an effusion of certain rays which will be discovered one day and named after their discoverer—Professor Jenkinson, perhaps—the Jenkinson Rays. I only know that Irving possessed this gift of magnetism in a supreme degree. And I conjecture that to it, rather than to the quality of his genius—which was a thing to be really appreciated only by the few—was due the unparalleled sway that he had over the many."

There was that about Irving which suggested that he would have been great in any walk of life—as a Lord Chief Justice, archbishop, leader of the House of Commons, master criminal! I have included this last because of the touch of the satanic in Irving. Almost everywhere in his great gallery of portraits there is a hint of Mephistopheles. Three of his finest pieces of acting were Jingle in an adaptation of *Pickwick*, Louis XI in Boucicault's play, and Dubosc in *The Lyons Mail*. There you had all the degrees of villainy, beginning with the plausible, jaunty rascal and descending through craft and guile to pure brute. Who that ever saw it can forget how Dubosc, having rifled the pockets of the murdered post-boy, turned to pat the horse?

The point about Irving was that even in his most saintly pictures you felt the presence of this devil. In that picture unmatched for sweetness and pathos—Wills's Charles I—this devil still lurked. The old diabolism glowed even in those sad eyes when Ireton refused to remove his hat, and Charles, turning to those about him, said, "Who is this—rude—gentleman?"

I must deal here with the suggestion that Irving's type of acting would not move us to-day. The type might not—Irving himself would. That he would not is one of those recurrent fallacies which, as often as you demolish them,

continue to crop up. Genius is not limited by the fashion of its day. People appear to understand this all right except when it's a matter of the theatre.

Nobody supposes that Napoleon and Nelson would have found modern warfare too much for their genius; it is admitted that they'd have adapted themselves to modern conditions. I've never heard anybody suggest that W. G. Grace couldn't have played Grimmett's bowling, or that Jim Driscoll's left hand, put up against a modern opponent, would have lost its cunning.

Similarly I maintain that Irving, adapting his genius, would impress us now as much as he impressed us then. I dare say you've all been frightened by Mr Laughton. I can only tell you that in comparison with Henry Irving those were baby terrors. For Mr Laughton's dramas have been those of the gangster order, whereas Irving's cataclysms concerned emperors and prelates, the difference being that between an earthquake and the bursting of a gas main.

There would, I think, have been no difficulty about the plays. Irving had no relation to the drama of his own day. Ibsen, Shaw, Pinero, Henry Arthur Jones, might never have existed; and to-day Maugham and Priestley would not exist for him. Irving had that kind of acting genius which has always created its own playwrights. When Bernhardt was not playing the French classics she had her own tame dramatist called Sardou to turn out *Fédoras*, *Théodoras*, and what Mr Shaw once called *Toscadoras*.

Similarly Irving had W. G. Wills and Comyns Carr. To-day, doubtless, he'd have employed Messrs Balder, Dash, and Fustian to turn out dramas which as likely as not would be about Russia. And just as in *The Bells* Mathias used to throw open the door of that inn-parlour and shake the snow off his cape, so to-day the same figure would be doing the same thing. Only the door would be that of a throne-room, and the name of the character would be Rasputin! No doubt the highbrows would say that this isn't acting. But my view is that the lowbrows would so crowd the theatre that the highbrows would never get in to see whether it is acting or not.

That Irving was a great actor is proved by the fact that he stood well outside his own period. For all great

players have been known by this, that it is their own part first and the play afterwards. This may be all very wrong, and there's a school of thought which insists that the play's the thing and that the business of the actor is to be a mere cog in the machine. This would never have suited Irving, and will never suit any magnoperative player, since the essence of your virtuoso is that it's the cog which matters and not the machine.

It's the old point all over again. Would you rather see a great batsman make a soul-stirring century and his side lose? Or would you rather see a number of little meritorious batsmen poking about until they've laboriously compiled the necessary runs?

And that is the difference between Irving's kind of play and Ibsen, Tchekhov, and Shaw interpreted by a team.

Ernest Dowson has a little poem which begins :

Before my light goes out for ever, if God should give me a
choice of graces,
I would not reck of length of days, nor crave for things to be;
But cry : " One day of the great lost days, one face of all the
faces,
Grant me to see and touch once more and nothing more to see."

My own boon would be, not to shake hands with Irving, or even to speak to him. I should just want to be fourteen again and see the curtain rise on that Alsatian inn, hear the wind blow open the window of the next room smashing the crockery and glass, and know that throbbing of the temples and queasy stomach-feeling which Irving's appearance momentarily allayed. Allayed while the applause lasted. After which the great actor would settle down to his night's job of making the seated heart knock at the ribs. Henry Irving was the greatest actor I ever saw or shall ever see.

Feb. 10 Sorting out my papers before the removal to
Thursday. Fairfax Road, which is now complete, I came
across this letter :

Savage Club

1 Carlton House Terrace, S.W.1

9th April, 1936

DEAR MR AGATE,

Enclosed is a copy of the letter which George Bernard Shaw sent to George Alexander in answer to the invitation

which had been sent to G.B.S. as a representative dramatic author to attend Irving's funeral in Westminster Abbey. C. Aubrey Smith would, if necessary, confirm its authenticity as he was present when I opened it. I have often quoted it, but it has never been published.

I, personally, destroyed the original in Adelphi Terrace soon after the funeral, when Lionel Belmore and I—in our youth—were looking for G.B.S. to 'tan' him.

Yours faithfully,

[Sd.] RALPH KIMPTON

And here is G.B.S.'s letter :

Adelphi Terrace

November 1905

MY DEAR ALEXANDER,

I return the ticket for the Irving funeral. Literature, alas, has no place at his death as it had no place in his life. Irving would turn in his coffin if I came, just as Shakespear will turn in his coffin when Irving comes.

Yours very truly,

[Sd.] GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

This being too good to be lost, I wrote to G.B.S. asking his permission to publish, with the result that this morning Mrs Shaw rang me up and asked me to lunch. I went, primed with silence. Which was a good job, since from the moment I entered Whitehall Court to the moment of leaving it G.B.S. talked wittily, weightily, garrulously, informatively, charmingly. He has an odd way of not looking at anybody while he talks, sitting upright in a chair which is frail, spindly, and altogether beautiful like himself. I have no notion what we ate or drank.

At the back of my mind was a letter I received this morning from Doris Thorne, Henry Arthur Jones's daughter, saying she wants to tell me "G.B.S.'s story of how it was entirely due to him that Irving was buried in Westminster Abbey!" Obviously, to hear from G.B.S.'s own lips how he arranged for the Abbey funeral and then declined to go to it must be a piece of Shavianism which any collector would want to bag. Going down to Whitehall, I had

pondered what conversational fly to use. Needlessly. The old man landed himself before I had put the rod together; it was like picnicking on some delicious bank and leaving the fish to do the rest. What G.B.S. said went something like this, and if I paragraph it, it is only to mark the sense and not because there was ever anything like a pause:

"It's time somebody wrote an article to let the British public into the secret of that old humbug Irving. In his lifetime he was looked up to not only as an actor, but as a great figure of literature and what not, the fact being that he was entirely illiterate and didn't know Shakespeare's best lines from his worst. As a producer he was deplorable, and as a manager he was never any use to me. His principal merit was in making the public believe that a man who had none of the essential qualifications for an actor was a great actor. The reason that Irving when he first appeared in Dublin was hissed for three weeks was that Barry Sullivan had taught Dublin what to look for in an actor, and Irving was nothing like it. He had no voice, and, when you looked closely at him, no face. He set to work to make himself both, and there was never a moment when he wasn't studying how to impress himself on the public. He set about this as relentlessly as any Hitler or Mussolini.

"It was the fashion at that time for actor-managers to bribe critics, and Irving tried it on me by proposing to buy *The Man of Destiny*. As the best part was written to suit Ellen Terry I consented, only stipulating for a date, as it was a youthful work and I didn't want it producing in forty years' time as my latest. Irving hum'd and ha'd, and said there could always be a paragraph in the Press. Dropping his voice, he said mysteriously, 'There's a man who does that sort of thing.' I said, 'Yes, I know him.' But he would make no promises, and presently I got a letter from Bram Stoker saying that while no date could be arranged I could always draw on account of royalties at any time I wanted. Shortly after this I went to see Irving's Richard III, and it seemed to me that something was wrong. At one point the house was electrified to hear

Richard roar at Lady Anne, 'Get up-stage, woman!' In my article I said that Irving didn't seem to be answering his helm.¹ A week later I met Bram Stoker, who asked why I had written so violently: 'Surely you knew the old man was drunk.' And do you know, my dear Mr Agate, it had not occurred to me. It is only fair to say that later on Harry Irving said he was glad I had written that article as it might do the old man some good and teach him to keep sober. Anyhow next day *The Man of Destiny* was returned to me with a note to say there was no further question of production. Most of the letters Irving sent out were written by his retinue. But I remember one in his own handwriting. The first sentence contained one of those simple grammatical errors which Queen Victoria used to make. The last sentence was 'For God's sake leave me alone.'

"The day after Irving died I got a letter from Lady Irving asking me to go and see her. She was an Irish-woman, and"—with a twinkle—"the Irish are very good at living on hate. She said that General Booth and Dr Clifford were trying to arrange for an Abbey funeral, and that she was determined that her disgusting beast of a husband should not have any such honour thrust upon him. It appears that Irving had made a will leaving his property in three equal parts to his two sons and Mrs Aria, that he had not left her even his second-best bedstead, and that she intended to have her revenge. Would I help her to stop the Abbey funeral? I was terrified. I wanted an Abbey funeral, not for Irving's sake, but for the profession's, and I knew that she had only to send a postcard to Booth or Clifford to have the whole thing dropped and Irving cast into obloquy worse than Parnell's or Dilke's. So I went home and wrote her a long letter full of sympathy, at the end of which I said I felt bound to advise her as her lawyer would. I told her that when Irving caught a cold in Manchester

¹ But G.B.S. said a good deal more than this. He said that Richard played the scene with Lady Anne "as if he were a Houndsditch salesman cheating a factory girl over a pair of second-hand stockings." Also that Irving "never did and never will make use of a play otherwise than as a vehicle for some fantastic creation of his own."

and wanted to go to the seaside, the hat had to be sent round, that this sort of thing was always happening in the profession, and might at any time happen to Harry and Laurence. I went on: 'If this should happen, you, as the widow of a great actor buried in Westminster Abbey, have only to lift your little finger and you will get a civil pension. But if you are the widow of a worthless scoundrel you will get nothing.' That did the trick. Lady Irving withdrew her opposition and shortly after got her pension. I see no reason why the facts should not now be made known, though I would rather it was in a book than a newspaper article. You can also use my letter, which I had quite forgotten, but which I think is rather a good letter."

The talk throughout the meal was all about Irving, whose Charles I, G.B.S. said, was a wonderful mosaic. He said the moment when Charles went down on one knee and begged the soldier not to desert was one of the most moving things in the theatre. He said I had done the right thing about Irving in my broadcast talk, which encouraged me to ask whether, on the whole, he didn't think that Irving, who had begun as an illiterate humbug, had ended up as a magnificent actor. "I suppose you might say so," said G.B.S., "but he wasn't magnificent in the way Macready was." I asked how magnificent that had been. G.B.S. said, "I never saw Macready. But my father did, in *Coriolanus*, and when I asked him what he was like he said, 'Like a mad bull.'" Allan Monkhouse once wrote much the same thing about Benson's *Coriolanus*: "It is immensely spirited, and if he bellows like a bull it is one of Mr Meredith's 'bulls that walk the pastures with kingly flashing coats.'"

Feb. 11 Irving was a bit of a sadist and "cunning past man's Friday. thought." Proof? His wire to Martin-Harvey on the first night of *The Only Way*: "Be bold and resolute." Was he hoping Jack would know the whole quotation?

Feb. 12 Birmingham again. Have bought a chestnut *Saturday*. colt by Viking out of Tudor Rose. He will not be two until July, is of exquisite quality, and looks like making 15.2. His action with only the thinnest of plates is the most dazzling I have ever seen at any age. Absolutely irresistible, and I made no pretence of resisting.

Feb. 14 Have named the new house Villa Volpone, and *Monday*. the colt Volpone, which in Hackney circles will be a word of two syllables.

Feb. 15 One hundred years ago to-day was performed at *Tuesday*. Covent Garden for the first time *The Lady of Lyons*, by Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Bulwer has always been a vexed question. Chambers says, "No two readers agree on the relative merits of his books." (Jock's comment on this is that Bulwer hasn't got two readers!) I know that as a schoolboy I waded through four frightful novels, after which for several years I believed that the Last of the Barons lived at Pompeii, and that Rienzi and Harold were the vanquishers of Hengist and Horsa. I also remember being intensely annoyed when my parents wouldn't let me read *Ernest Maltravers*, alleging that it was too 'advanced' for a boy of sixteen.

It is a commonplace that in England the stage has always been fifty years behind the other arts. Bulwer is very much a case in point. In 1898, the year in which I was sixteen, Mrs Humphry Ward was slogging away at *Marcella*, and Robert Hichens, in *The Green Carnation*, was having his work cut out to steer clear of libel. Hardy had just published *Tess* and was writing *Jude the Obscure*; Swinburne was finishing *Poems and Ballads*. Everything was terrifically *fin de siècle*, including Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins*. It seems odd in recollection that while the *Yellow Book* was left lying about my mother's drawing-room with Beardsley's illustrations to a French novelist having the shuddersome name of Choderlos de Laclos, *Ernest Maltravers* was a closed book in which I was forbidden to

pry. It was too 'advanced' even for 1898. Now *The Lady of Lyons*, written in the years after *Maltravers*, was regarded by everybody as harmless, and ridiculously *vieux jeu*. Bulwer's novel, then, was fifty-five years ahead of his play.

It is the easiest thing in the world to find fault with the old thing. But it has many merits, the first of which is an entirely original plot. Claude Melnotte is a gardener's son in the neighbourhood of Lyons. He is a youth of remarkable genius who writes poetry, paints, and fences with extreme accomplishment and all apparently by the light of nature. He ventures to raise his eyes to the beautiful daughter of M. Deschappelles, a wealthy citizen of Lyons, whose snobbish wife has infected Pauline with some of her own false pride. Claude's widowed mother warns him of the hopelessness of his passion. He has ventured to send Pauline a signed copy of his verses. His messenger brings him back the manuscript, returned not with thanks but with blows administered by Pauline's lackeys. While Melnotte is smarting under this insult two wealthy villains, Beauséant and Glavis, whose addresses Pauline has rejected, determine to make him the means of a base revenge upon her. They will supply him with fine clothes and money, and introduce him to the Deschappelles as an Italian prince, under which disguise he is to woo and wed Pauline. Melnotte, in his despair and exasperation, lends himself to the scheme and carries it out with complete success. After the wedding Claude takes Pauline to his mother's humble cottage, and there she learns of the trick that has been played on her. There is a scene of fury and despair; and after it Claude hands his bride over to his mother's chaperonage, promising to send for her parents the next day and to give her every facility for obtaining a divorce. He joins the army of Italy under General Buonaparte, and returns after two or three years, a colonel and a hero. He arrives in Lyons just as Pauline is about to give her hand to the villain Beauséant in order to save her father from ruin. Holding his military cloak before his face, Claude assists unrecognised at the sacrifice until the notary is on

the point of handing the marriage contract to Pauline for her signature. Whereupon Claude seizes the document and tears it to pieces :

BEAUSÉANT. Are you mad ?

DESCHAPPELLES. How, sir ! What means this insult ?

MELNOTTE. Peace, old man ! I have a prior claim. Before the face of man and heaven I urge it ; I outbid yon sordid huckster for your priceless jewel. (*Giving a pocket-book.*) There is the sum twice told ! Blush not to take it : There's not a coin that is not bought and hallowed in the cause of nations with a soldier's blood.

BEAUSÉANT. Torments and death !

PAULINE. That voice ! Thou art——

MELNOTTE. Thy husband !

This, I know, is sorry stuff. And nothing could be lamer or more bathetic than the play's conclusion, which runs incredibly as follows :

PAULINE. Oh ! My father, you are saved—and by my husband ! Ah, blessed hour !

MELNOTTE. Yet you weep still, Pauline !

PAULINE. But on thy breast !—these tears are sweet and holy !

DESCHAPPELLES. You have won love and honour nobly, sir ! Take her—be happy both !

MME DESCHAPPELLES. I'm all astonished ! Who, then, is Colonel Morier ?

DAMAS. You behold him !

MELNOTTE. Morier no more after this happy day ! I would not bear again my father's name till I could deem it spotless ! The hour's come ! Heaven smiled on conscience ! As the soldier rose from rank to rank, how sacred was the fame that cancell'd crime, and raised him nearer thee !

MME DESCHAPPELLES. A colonel and a hero ! Well, that's something ! He's wondrously improved ! I wish you joy, sir !

MELNOTTE. Ah ! the same love that tempts us into sin, if it be true love, works out its redemption ; and he who seeks repentance for the past should woo the Angel Virtue in the future.

Ellen Terry, in her *Memoirs*, vindicated the old play delightfully :

I was never really good in the part of Lytton's proud heroine. The very fact that I tried to understand Pauline was against me. There is only one way to play her, and to be distracted by questions of sincerity and consistency means that you will miss that way for a certainty ! I missed it, and fell between two stools. Finding that it was useless to depend upon feeling, I groped after the definite rules which had always governed the delivery of Pauline's fustian, and the fate that commonly overtakes those who try to put old wine into new bottles overtook me.

Yet Shaw could write, in 1895 :

I remember years ago, when *The Lady of Lyons* was first produced at the Lyceum, being struck with two things about it: first, the fact that Henry Irving, after much striving and, if I may be allowed the expression, not a little floundering, had at last discovered the method of heroic acting; and, second, that in the scene where Claude brings Pauline home after their wedding, Miss Ellen Terry, by a number of delicate touches, slipped into the scene a play of subtle emotion quite foreign to its traditions, with such effect that I can conjure up those moments perfectly to this day, though my utmost effort of memory cannot bring back the very faintest adumbration of any other scene in Pauline's part. . . .

Feb. 16 P.C. from Brother Edward saying his land-
Wednesday. lady has just told him a long story about
meeting Mrs Patrick Campbell in a *hydrant*
at Scarborough.

Feb. 17 At supper at the Savoy Grill played one of my
Thursday. old games. What eleven guests, given *carte*
blanche with everybody since Adam, would you
ask to dinner ?

Bertie van Thal suggested the following :

GEORGE IV
 GRETA GARBO
 ROSSINI
 QUEEN ELIZABETH
 GOETHE
 JANE AUSTEN
 SHAKESPEARE
 CATHERINE THE GREAT
 GARRICK
 TALLULAH BANKHEAD
 GOGOL

Tony Baerlein's list :

LEONARDO DA VINCI
 TCHEHOV
 PEPYS
 AUGUSTUS CÆSAR
 LOYOLA
 PROUST
 VERMEER
 PRAXITELES
 TORRIGIANO
 ST JOHN
 BERNARD SHAW

Torrighiano stumped us all until Tony reminded us that he was the man who broke Michael Angelo's nose. When I got home I looked up Torry in Hazlitt and found that he was the sculptor of the monument to Henry VII and his wife in Westminster Abbey.

Peter Page wanted the following :

WAGNER
 OSCAR WILDE
 PETRONIUS ARBITER
 MARIE ANTOINETTE
 NERO
 BEN JONSON
 SAPPHO

FREDERICK, PRINCE OF WALES¹
 JEAN HARLOW
 STALIN
 CORA PEARL

For my list of guests I proposed :

CHEOPS
 HANNIBAL
 BURBAGE
 THE CAPTAIN OF THE ' MARIE CELESTE '
 ELIZABETH'S ESSEX
 GILLES DE RAIS
 LE MARQUIS DE SADE
 CASANOVA
 BILLY THE KID
 SIR EDWARD MARSHALL-HALL
 SIR BERNARD SPILSBURY

The point is that the first four would solve the world's four greatest mysteries : how the Pyramids were built, the reason for the halt at Cannæ, who wrote Shakespeare's plays, and what happened to that ship found in the middle of a dead-calm ocean with not a soul on board and the table laid for a meal. I would have included Mrs Wallace, the victim in the best of all murder cases, the Liverpool murder, but for the possibility that she was struck from behind and did not see her assailant. The choice of Essex is obvious. Billy the Kid was a Mexican bandit with more romance about him than your Chicago gangster.

Jock said a list of the guests you wouldn't have was more revealing ! Here are the people he would *not* invite :

DREYFUS
 GENERAL BOOTH
 SWEDENBORG
 HARRIET MARTINEAU

¹ The nonentity whose epitaph begins : " Here lies Fred, who was alive and is dead."

KOTZEBUE
 RUSKIN
 IBSEN
 SAVONAROLA
 CHATEAUBRIAND
 JOHN KNOX
 JAMES AGATE

Feb. 18 The Old Bailey. This is the fourth and last day
Friday. of the Hyde Park Hotel jewel robbery case, in which
 four young men, educated at the best public schools,
 receive sentences from eighteen months' hard labour to
 seven years' penal servitude with 20 strokes of the 'cat.'
 Crowded court. Celebrities—'better than any play.' A
 horrid glamour about the whole affair. I am naturally fas-
 cinated by criminals, whose dreadful jauntiness haunts me
 for days.

Feb. 22 Looking into *Vanity Fair*, I came across this vivid
Tuesday. description of the gilded scum of Thackeray's
 day, which perfectly fits the young men in the
 Mayfair case, and which no newspaper has had the wit to
 quote :

There is no town of any mark in Europe but it has its
 little colony of English raffs—men whose names Mr Hemp
 the officer reads out periodically at the sheriff's court—
 young gentlemen of very good family often, only that the
 latter disowns them; frequenters of billiard-rooms and
 estaminets, patrons of foreign races and gaming-tables.
 They people the debtors' prisons—they drink and swagger
 —they fight and brawl—they run away without paying—
 they have duels with French and German officers—they
 cheat Mr Spooney at *écarté*—they get the money, and
 drive off to Baden in magnificent britzkas—they try their
 infallible martingale, and lurk about the tables with empty
 pockets, shabby bullies, penniless bucks, until they can
 swindle a Jew banker with a sham bill of exchange, or
 find another Mr Spooney to rob. The alternations of
 splendour and misery which these people undergo are very
 queer to view. Their life must be one of great excitement.

Feb. 26 From to-day's *Manchester Guardian*:
Saturday.

A plaster bust by his mother, the late Duchess of Rutland, of Lord Haddon, who died aged nine in 1894, has been presented to the Tate this week. Some visitors have noted two finger-marks on the arm of the child and made inquiries. The explanation is that the Duchess, after completing the modelling but before the plaster was quite dry, called in the Belvoir servants to see it and one of the old servants touched the shoulder and said "Good-bye, little lord."

March 3 Took Mrs Shaw a basket of spring flowers, prim
Thursday. as one of Mrs Kendal's bonnets. We talked a little about *The Three Sisters*, which they had just seen, and I recommended F. L. Lucas's *Land's End*. G. B. S. said, "But he's an old man!" I said, "Oldish men have written goodish plays." And except for a short, musical bark answer came there none. We were standing in the middle of the room, Shaw with his back to the window and intercepting a shaft of brilliant March sunshine. He has become so insubstantial that even in ordinary light he looks like a figure in stained-glass. As he stood against the window I saw the outline of head and chin. William Archer once said mischievously that if you could see Shaw's face without the beard it would be hatched-shaped and mean. Archer was wrong. To-day I clearly saw the chin, and it juts nobly. The point about the shaft of sun is that it stressed the unreality of one who is rapidly turning into a saint. Which I expect will make it very uncomfortable for some other saints. The sun streaming through the white hair made a halo of it, and I thought of Coleridge's "a man all light."

March 6 Lunched with Hamish Hamilton. Duck, cheese
Sunday. soufflé, Perrier-Jouet 1928. As a protest against the performance of the Schumann Violin Concerto, which we regard as indefensible, we listen instead to a very good record of Mozart's Quintet in G minor. Then late

to the Albert Hall to hear Menuhin play the Mendelssohn and Brahms Concertos. I doubt whether he is physically big enough for the latter, which he plays insinuatingly, whereas Kreisler in it is commanding. The Mendelssohn is of an agonising sweetness. I suppose in the Hallé Concert days I heard Norman Neruda play this a dozen times and Sarasate nearly as often. But never has it sounded so melting as to-day. Perhaps it isn't only the music or the playing. I keep thinking of the summer we spent as children at Appletreewick, and how, as I lay reading in the croft, the sound of Edward practising the first movement used to come through the open window. He was eleven, and next year, again at Appletreewick, played the whole Concerto very well. Later, at Giggleswick, I remember standing by the beck purling in the street beneath the windows of the music rooms and listening to little Lenny Watkins, the music-master, practising this same Concerto, which he played at the school concert. He was a charming little man, an innocent who, having to go from Scarborough to Blackpool, solved the problem by going *via* London.

Altogether a day of reminiscences. Attended the annual dinner of the Gallery First Nighters, and talked to an exquisite old lady with white hair. It was Mabel Love.

March 7 Motored to Portsmouth and lectured to a women's *Monday*. Luncheon Club of 800 members. A bob a nob is too cheap, and I was cross with Jock for accepting. However, I gave them my best, and they lapped it up. Spent an hour going over the *Victory* and another hour in Winchester Cathedral. Home about eight and wrote my book article, after which Jock took me to supper at the Café Royal.

We talked about J. M. Bulloch, who died on Saturday. He was a dwarfish, bottle-nosed Scot with a watery blue eye and an immense, controlled pugnacity. A ceaseless worker, crammed with lore, and an unquestioned authority on subjects of no interest—the ins-and-outs of breeding in Scottish clans was one of them. Jock said, “You are wrong

in thinking the man was a bore. If you found him a bore at all, it was your fault. Bulloch was a bit of the eighteenth century, and if you wanted to describe him in a single phrase you might say that he was a pedant out of one of Smollett's novels."

March 8 The landlord of a pub in Covent Garden has the *Tuesday*. engaging habit of calling everybody by his last initial. At the opera one evening Richard Strauss asked Peter Page where he could drink some good English beer, whereupon Peter took him to this pub and introduced the famous man to the landlord. The next time Peter went in the landlord said, "Good evening, Mr P. Mr S. not with you?"

March 11 Went to a poorish play at the Gate Theatre, *Friday*. called *Elizabeth, la Femme sans Homme*. Came home and read a long time in Lytton Strachey's *Elizabeth and Essex*. The best passage in it is the description of Francis Bacon, and the best sentence in that passage: "It is probably always disastrous not to be a poet."

At 2.45 A.M. listened in to the Max Baer-Tommy Farr fight, which our man lost handsomely; this should be the end of Tommy so far as the championship is concerned. It appears that there is inefficiency abroad as well as at home. The fellow at the ringside who did the broadcasting told us the fight was one of twelve rounds. After nine rounds he announced that Baer was looking grand, and that Farr, if he wanted to win, would have to go all out in the three remaining rounds. After the tenth round he apologised. He had just discovered that the fight was one of fifteen rounds! In a world broadcast this is disgraceful.

March 16 Lunched at the Hyde Park Hotel with Willie *Wednesday*. Ranken, the painter. Afterwards to his studio, where he showed me a drawing he made last week of the Queen. Willie has a birthday book with Shakespearean quotations of his own choosing for every day in the year. Sometimes they are of an outstanding appositeness.

Here is mine, from the description of Ajax in *Troilus and Cressida* :

A man into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion : there is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attainment, but he carries some strain of it : he is melancholy without cause and merry against the hair.

March 17 I must start collecting walking-sticks in earnest.
Thursday. Some time ago George Robey gave me a stick cut by a Zulu out of a knobkerrie used by his grandfather at some unpronounceable battle under Cetewayo. Then, at a dealer's in Lewes, I picked up a stick pawned by a waiter and which had belonged to the Emperor Franz Joseph. To-day Fred Leigh begs my proud acceptance of a handsome silver-topped malacca cane presented in 1889 to John Hare. Dining recently with Clarke-Smith at his house in Chertsey, I had my eye on an exquisite stick which once belonged to Henry Irving. After dinner Clarkie offered me a plaque which had hung in Barrie's bedroom since he was a boy, and which J. M. B. gave him. I refused this, but the bigger gift turned out not to be forthcoming. Like refusing a sprat and not getting the mackerel !

March 22 The last six days are a jumble. These are the
Tuesday. things I remember. Going to a *Sunday Times* dinner at which I hold forth on the political situation, *nolens volens*, and because Lord Winterton overhears something I say casually to Sidebotham ; am not too much abashed by my audience, which includes Sir George Clerk, formerly our Ambassador to France, Ernest Newman, Herbert Morgan, Beverley Baxter, Dick Shanks, Denison Ross, E. V. Lucas, and Lord Hewart. Wondering whether the English language has a clumsier sentence than one of St John Ervine's in Sunday's *Observer* : " The flight from the cinema justifies the hope that the fear that imbecility is increasing is unfounded." Attending with 700 other people the jubilee luncheon to Julia Neilson, listening to Sir John Simon

talk a lot about his profession and a little about hers, and hearing Julia reply in a carefully prepared speech which she over-acts. Sitting through *The King of Nowhere*, yet another exasperating play by Bridie; Pope's "Means not, but blunders round about a meaning," might have been written about this. Also Noel Coward's *Operette*, which is *Bitter Sweet* all over again, and very much watered down.

And last, getting ideas for a volume of short stories to be entitled *Contes Scabreux*. The source of my inspiration is somebody's remark about meeting Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, and being shocked by the terrible irony and "coquetterie narquoise" of the old man's extraordinary tales.

A Cabinet Minister, visiting Paris, is accosted outside the Café de la Paix, and persuaded to buy a packet of improper postcards. Falling in love with the enterprising subject of one of them, he exhausts Paris and then ransacks Berlin, Brussels, Rome, Naples, Budapest, Cairo, etc., etc. The search—for he turns in his portfolio—lasts fourteen years, until he finally runs his ideal to earth at Lisbon, in a brothel of which she is the blowsy, raddled proprietress. He discovers that the photograph was already twenty years old when it came into his possession. This story is called "Feelthy Peecture."

The second story is about the usual well-dressed man of fifty who pleads guilty to one of those curious happenings which park bye-laws describe as misdemeanours. He asks the magistrate to take into account 8744 similar eccentricities! Title: "In the Gloaming."

The third is about a farm-hand who falls in love with an acrobat at a travelling circus. Next year the farm-hand again goes to the circus. But acrobats, alas, are come-and-go birds, and this one has flown. The farm-hand commits suicide, and everybody's sex is left nicely undetermined in a mush of Housman and Gide. To be called "An Essex Tragedy."

March 28 Letter from Clarkie, telling me that he and
Wednesday. Audrey, E. V. Lucas's clever daughter, are sending me Irving's walking-stick duly inscribed!

March 25 I must be getting old. A year or so ago I should *Friday.* to-day have started to break lances with Jack De Leon and the Director of the Tate Gallery. With Jack because he threatens to broadcast something about his new production at the Savoy between the acts of plays at other theatres. On the lines of the trailer in the cinema. It's no good Jack pleading that he proposes to do this only when the plays so be-sandwiched are farces. Other managers will be less conscientious, and presently we shall be having musical-comedy excerpts between the acts of *The Three Sisters*. It is the thin end of a monstrous wedge, and the proper thing to do with thin ends is to nip them in the bud! The case of the Director of the Tate—it sounds like a Sherlock Holmes title!—is even more heinous. It appears that, under the new Customs regulations, works by Brancusi and several other distinguished sculptors have been refused admission to this country as works of art because the Director does not like them: "When I am told that an ostrich egg in marble represents the birth of the world something must be wrong." The reason I am not taking up arms is that my sea of troubles is already big enough. At the moment I am in the thick of three rows: (1) With *Truth*, which has a weekly attack on me because I dislike *French without Tears* and hold its success to be largely responsible for the inane comedies now flooding the English stage. (2) With Macmillans, the publishers, for advertising the bad things I said about Osbert Sitwell's *Those were the Days*, suppressing the good, and calling the whole "James Agate's Opinion." (3) I've forgotten what this is, but I know it's on.

March 26 Here are Four, Five, and Six in my *Contes* *Saturday.* *Scabreux.*

In Number Four a purse-proud father of two sons adores the elder, who is a successful crook and swindler, and hates the younger, who is an unsuccessful painter. But the real reason for his hate is that he does not believe the second

child is his. On his death-bed he learns from his wife that it is the first-born who is her lover's. I shall call this "Jean et Pierre." I hope I do not need to point out that Maupassant's story is called "Pierre et Jean."

"The Statue" is about a night-watchman at an art-gallery who becomes enamoured of Antinous. As the statue persists in remaining cold, he smashes it. Delivering sentence, the judge says: "Had your victim been a female bust, the court, partially understanding your infatuation, would have been satisfied with sending you for six months to a mental institute at Harrogate. But since you deliberately chose a full-length male figure you will go to penal servitude for 40 years."

Six is about a black slave who commits suicide because of the impossibility of becoming a white slave. A title for this will doubtless occur to me later on.

March 29 *L'appétit vient en mangeant*. My *Contes* are Tuesday. coming thick and fast.

Seven is about a small boy who spends his summer holidays delighting his soul with the combined aroma of sea-breeze, cigar, and braided matches, for which purpose he follows old gentlemen along the piers and promenades of Brighton, Blackpool, Yarmouth, etc. The braided match goes out of fashion, but the complex persists. Whereby, as the result of highly understandable misunderstandings, the poor fellow spends the greater part of his grown-up life in gaol.

Eight is called "The Sermon." It is about the Dean of St Hugh's, who discovers that he has some talent for pornography. But, alas, he cannot get the stories right, and the artist in him is in despair. One day Mrs Dean, coming across a story in her husband's study, supplies the missing touch. Thereafter he leaves his stories about, and always they are put right, although not even in the most connubial moments is this other partnership alluded to. One Sunday the Dean ascends to his pulpit, and, opening his sermon-case, finds not his sermon, but his latest story.

Nine is about a gentlewoman and a pedomancer who

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The Tenth *Conte*, "Chez Topinambour," is my masterpiece to date. Topinambour is a restaurateur and, despite ferocious moustaches, essentially a kind and decent man and a good, though, alas, inadequate, husband! Wherefore Madame, a stout woman of exorbitant passions, must take a lover. She chooses the head waiter, a Greek of mean mind but noble muscle. Monsieur suspects, and the pair agree to put him out of the way. Later, the wedding takes place. But it is *the wedding of Mademoiselle*, the pretty daughter whom the Greek has all along secretly preferred to her mother. The business continues. The Greek is now the smiling *patron*, his little wife bustles bird-like about the gay little room. The cash-desk is presided over by the Veuve Topinambour, a famished dragon whose gaze never leaves the young couple. One day the dragon asks the Greek whether he has noticed those sheep's eyes which *the new Cypriot* head waiter has begun to make at Madame. . . . I end the

story here, since to pursue it to its conclusion would turn it into a full-length novel.

March 31 Annual Meeting of the Critics' Circle, of which *Thursday*. I am now President. This reduces my three unfulfilled ambitions to two. I still want to be President of the Hackney Society, and to sit at the top table at Mills's Olympia Circus.

April 1 I have no objection whatever to *A Yank at Oxford Friday*, considered as slapstick. *Charley's Aunt* is my favourite farce. But consider the claims made for this film in the programme, which tells us that the young American played by Robert Taylor finally captures the respect of Oxford, just as Oxford has already captured him: "For the sound of its bells will go with you, sir, wherever you go, to the end of your life!" The programme goes on: "That is why a great 'diplomatic première,' crowded with Cabinet Ministers, members of the Houses of Lords and Commons, Ambassadors, and all those who believe in the destiny of the English-speaking peoples, is taking place at the Empire Theatre to-night." J'ever read such nonsense? Did anybody ever dream of linking up *Charley's Aunt* with the Destiny of Youth, or any other tommy-rot? No one knows what the wild waves are saying. No one knows what the spires of Oxford are dreaming. But their dreams, I think, are about something more than debagging, bump suppers, and flirting with bedraggled Zuleika Dobsons in the form of booksellers' wives. If the spires of Oxford dream, surely it is because her young men are seeing visions. And I cannot think that these visions are the nightmares of *A Yank at Oxford*.

April 2 Am getting quite good at not sticking my oar *Saturday*. in. At least I have not intervened in the discussion taking place in the *S.T.* about the best way to begin a story. But whether I can keep out next Sunday is another matter; somebody ought to point out that Stevenson's essay entitled "A Gossip on Romance" in

*Memories and Portraits*¹ is written round this theme. My two favourite openings are French. The first is the opening to *Le Père Goriot*. As boys Brother Edward and I used to go about declaiming "Madame Vauquer, née de Conflans." The whole of Balzac is contained in that "née de Conflans." The mind which could have omitted that could not have conceived the *Human Comedy*; when you are out to create a world you do not reject anything. My second favourite opening is that of *Bel-Ami*: "Quand la caissière lui eut rendu la monnaie de sa pièce de cent sous, Georges Duroy sortit du restaurant." Maupassant, like Balzac, realised the part money must play in the extraordinary as well as in the everyday affairs of life. It makes me impatient when in the theatre some silly fellow whose girl won't have him goes off to Africa to shoot alligators. Ninety-five per cent. of the people I know couldn't raise the fare to Southend.

April 3 Lunched with Moiseiwitsch and his charming wife. *Sunday.* Then to the Palladium to hear Solomon. In the middle of Schumann's 'Carnival' Benno, who has an impish sense of humour, and knowing I should expect some critical profundity, whispered: "Mark ought never to have doubled that two-heart call last night!" Presently we were

¹ This essay contains an admirable example of the harm done when a sentence is detached from its context: "The serious theatre exists solely on moral grounds." In other words, the sole justification of a play is that it should be another form of sermon. Now put the sentence back in its context:

"Conduct is three parts of life, they say; but I think they put it high. There is a vast deal in life and letters both, which is not immoral, but simply non-moral; which either does not regard the human will at all, or deals with it in obvious and healthy relations; where the interest turns, not upon what a man shall choose to do, but on how he manages to do it; not on the passionate steps and hesitations of the conscience, but on the problems of the body and of the practical intelligence, in clean, open-air adventure, the shock of arms or the diplomacy of life. With such material as this it is impossible to build a play, for the serious theatre exists solely on moral grounds, and is a standing proof of the dissemination of the human conscience. But it is possible to build, upon this ground, the most joyous of verses, and the most lively, beautiful, and buoyant tales."

Which exactly sums up the difference between the 'moral' theatre and the cinema, whose business is to photograph lively, beautiful, and buoyant tales.

joined by a pianist called Cherniavsky. He told us that he had been giving some recitals in Vienna and got out of Austria two days before the Hitler coup, that his brother had just returned from Portugal, and that they are both off to India. Benno is going to South America. What fun pianists have!

April 5 A. E. W. Mason gave the cinema world a lesson *Tuesday*. in manners last night after the showing of *The Drum*. Holding Sabu and Desmond Tester each by an arm, he said, "Your Highnesses, Excellencies, the way this film started was this. Mr Korda asked me if I could think up a way in which the Elephant Boy could play a regimental drum in Peshawar. If this film does a bit more than that and adds to the good feeling the two races on the North-west Frontier already entertain for each other, so much the better."

Mason's honesty excused all the flim-flam that had gone before, whereas the bosh which heralded *A Yank at Oxford* brought the whole thing into contempt.

April 7 The Villa Volpone thrown open to the public. *Thursday*. After a trial luncheon to Monty and Ernest Thesiger, I had a dress-rehearsal yesterday, when Moiseiwitsch, Mark Hambourg, Tom Shaw, and Tony Baerlein came, and we played bridge afterwards. To-day was my first formal affair—Herschel Johnson, Moray McLaren, Harold Dearden, Bertie van Thal, and Jock. Fred was in great form below stairs, and Charles waited nearly as well as he drives. There was one awkward moment when I received, *en plein salon*, an ultimatum to the effect that if I insisted on toast I must wait for gravy. However, it all went off very well, and I now know that the V.V. can achieve foie gras, roast leg of lamb, new peas, asparagus, and a strawberry mousse. I gave them Brancatelli 1924 and some quite good brandy. I believe in doing my own shopping, and was rather surprised when some oily fellow tried to pass *two* bad half-crowns in my change. I told him

that, like the dotage of the Roman general, two "o'erflows the measure."

In the evening went to Harringay Stadium and saw Len Harvey take the Light Heavyweight Championship and Belt from Jock McAvoy. Dull.

April 10 Good small party given by Herbert Morgan at the *Sunday*. Reform Club. Not a burdensome amount to eat, but lashings of drink and talk. From which I cull:

HUMBERT WOLFE. Dennis Wheatley told me his novels have been translated into every European language except one. I can't think which.

PAMELA FRANKAU. English!

April 19 Spent Easter in Paris, where the best thing *Tuesday*. heard was, "Men are held, *ma chère*, not by our virtues, but by their vices." Also this doubtless old story about Clemenceau, but new to me. It was his eightieth birthday, and the old man was strolling down the Champs-Élysées with a friend. A pretty girl passed them, and Clemenceau said, "Oh, to be seventy again!"

Holiday clouded by the sudden death of Bertram Mills. People complained that towards the end our Bert became a little 'grand.' And why not? He *was* grand. Only intimate friends knew of his extraordinary courage and indomitable patience through years of an intensely trying illness. He was a man of few words, but his words made sense. He was stout and dapper, bombastic and shy, a little of the *parvenu* and a great deal of the gentleman. Though he travelled the world, he never learned a foreign language. He said, "When I get among foreigners I stand still, look British, and shout!"

Mills was the only man who ever tried to bribe me and succeeded. At one of his early circus luncheons his publicity man, Louis Nethersole, now dead, offered me ten pounds if I would mention the show in my wireless talk. I said, "Make it fifteen," and walked away. Dining that night with A. D. Peters, my literary agent, I mentioned the matter casually, and as a good joke. He said, "Jimmie,

you're an ass. To-morrow morning you'll get a cheque for fifteen quid, and Louis will have told the whole town about it." And he made me there and then get up from dinner and send messages to Louis and Mills to say that I had been joking. Mills replied, "Louis is a dear who means well, but his devotion to me makes him do silly things." After a lot of apologies the letter went on, "At the same time, I cannot bear to think of your Christmas smoking being less good than my own. I therefore ask you to accept as a personal gift . . ." The accompanying parcel contained fifteen pounds' worth of cigars with Mills's picture on the band !

April 20 Too many people are dying. First Edgar *Wednesday.* Jepson, who was a dear, though rather an acid dear, and now Filson Young. Filson could be what schoolboys call a "terror," and if he didn't like you, or wasn't liking you at the moment, he would look down, or rather over, his nose at you in a way a Roman Emperor would have envied. But he had an absolutely first-class mind, was a perfect host, and when the fit took him was capable of unexpected kindness. A great editor and a beautiful writer. I have never forgotten his saying in an article on the Escorial that the air was "strict with frost." He would never, in any circumstances, tolerate anything one jot or tittle below the first-rate, and his taste was impeccable. He pretended, towards the end, to have outlived music, which, he said categorically, had ceased to give him pleasure. But Filson was always outliving things in the sense that he was a pioneer, and the essence of pioneering is discarding the known for the unknown. He took an immense interest in broadcasting from its inception, and at the age of sixty taught himself to fly. A man easy to misjudge : a man with something of the eagle about him.

April 21 Two more Contes, which completes the dozen. *Thursday.* "One Good Turn . . ." is about the English mania for cleaning up London on the occasion of Coronations and suchlike. Comes news of another Paris

Exhibition, and a daft Home Secretary invites his French colleague to return the compliment. The request is agreed to, the police make a descent on a sumptuous apartment in the Avenue de la Grande Armée, and everybody in it—proprietor, attendants, clientèle—turns out to be English.

“Story without Moral” is about a brothel-keeper who after thirty years acquires moral scruples and retires with 800,000 francs, which he puts into a restaurant. Dabbling in a business he knows nothing about, he loses money and scruples, and has to start his old job over again.

Do these stories offend English taste? They have not been invented to please it. They are offered to the taste of another people, in a day more amusing than this. If ever I make a book of them I shall preface it with the dedication :

À L'ESPRIT GOUAILLEUR
DE
VILLIERS DE L'ISLE-ADAM
ILLUSTRE ÉCRIVAIN
ET
VRAI CABOT
AUX GRANDS CHEVEUX ET AUX YEUX ÉTRANGES
À LUI QUI CONNAISSAIT
LA VIE MYSTÉRIEUSE
ET
L'INDIGENCE NAVRANTE

April 22 As Sir Robert Vansittart handed the deeds of the *Friday*. National Theatre site to G.B.S. the first drops of rain fell after an officially proclaimed drought of nineteen days. *Absit omen!* Had this been a film function cavalry would have cleared the streets and every vulgarity been present in person. As it was, motor-buses and motor-bikes were allowed to drown the speakers, and nobody took any interest in the proceedings except the persons invited. At a meeting at the Hotel Rembrandt afterwards Sybil got very excited about gifts of £100 for the endowment of seats. Clifford Bax promised to take one for John Ford, whom everybody mistook for Henry, and what about Lord Nuffield? I announced that Lord Camrose would take one on behalf of the *Daily Telegraph* and Clement Scott, and Lord

Kernsley the same for the *Sunday Times* and J. T. Grein. About a dozen followed, including Martin-Harvey for Irving, Harcourt Williams for Ellen Terry, Viola Tree for Lady Tree, and Adeline Genée for Elsinore !

April 28 Reading the Abbé Dimnet's *My New World*, *Saturday*. I came across this :

My companion, a Swede, knew interesting people in Paris and had been the guest of Madame Labori, the widow of Captain Dreyfus's famous counsel. It was still bad form in 1920 to draw people out concerning the notorious affair, and consequently I refrained from asking questions. However, my room-mate once reverting to his conversations with Madame Labori, I asked him whether or not he had been able to infer the lady's own opinion of Dreyfus. The answer seemed interesting enough to be noted at once. Here it is : " Oh ! Madame Labori told me that her husband always believed that Dreyfus was innocent of what he was accused of, but constantly dreaded that he might unexpectedly own up to something worse."

April 24 The post last night brought this letter from *Sunday*. Donald Calthrop :

28 Latchett Road
S. Woodford, Essex
Thursday, April 21st, 1988

MY DEAR JAMES—OH ! MY DEAR JAMES,

You must not—really you mustn't. Write about Paris—from Paris. You began it last week, in your article saying that you were going to Paris—and this morning you add insult to injury, in that you don't write your casual critical essay on books, but you MUST rub the salt into the wounds by heading the article " Café de la Paix."

Blast and confound you ! You've given me a bad heart-ache. Did you sit on the Capucines side, or on the corner, or facing the Opera steps ? I don't care where you sat : you sat and I didn't.

If I'd been with you, we'd have met at 12 o'clock. I'd

have made you drink that amazing concoction of gin and Dubonnet—it smells, tastes, IS all Paris; it lingers stickily round the tongue, tasting of the smell of carnations, it slithers down to the tummy, warming as it goes, and the immediate effect is a rush of friendliness to the Anglo-Saxon heart.

Just ONE, my ancient—only one. Then, you've got to walk this morning: we cross (as you can now in comparative safety) to the Avenue, and we take the left side, give a glance up the Rue des Moulins, where stands an almost incredible brothel; the rest of the Avenue is dull, though Arnold Bennett used to tell me he thought it the most beautiful street in Paris. He would. Just for a moment bear with me and turn into that little maze of half-streets leading to the Palais Royal, and say Good-day to that superb statue of Camille Desmoulins: out by the Place of the Louvre, cross the Rivoli, hurt our thin shoes (I never remember to put on thick ones, and Paris is the hardest city on the feet that I know) crunching over the abominable gravel of the Louvre end of the Tuileries, pause a minute and see if the sun is west enough to be glinting through the Arc de Triomphe—over the Pont Royal (I bet you stop and look at the bridges—and, I hope, wave a greeting to the back of old Henry IV), turn to the Quai Voltaire—I always have to pay my respects to his statue, that grim piece of ironic copper—up the Rue de Seine to the Boulevard St Germain. (You are my guest this morning, so you must put up with these meanderings.) If you insist I will sit down and have an *apéritif* at the Deux Magots, but I'd rather hurry you over the Boul' and usher you into the tiny restaurant at the corner of the Rue de Dragon—the Restaurant des Sts Pères—do you know it?

There's only room for about ten people in the side room, and to-day being Paris-fine—you will know what I mean—we will sit at my usual table by the door, where I have spread myself for nearly forty years: the double doors are open to the street, so we can sit and watch the glorious absurdities of that beloved pageant of the Boulevard.

Paris Midi—L'Intransigeant—P'Soir. No, dear James, no paper. You are to be my paper—special edition with photograph, "James Agate and friend," and plying you with the most excellent food, and really good sound wine

—the patron has a marvellous Pouilly ; I will make you talk of many things, but mostly of the Paris I can see you love as I do.

The veal is very tender—the salad Madame will dress herself—the tart of the house is short in its pastry, and long in its memory of cherries—M'sieur grows them at his little farm at Maisons-Laffitte. I would have liked to give you fraises des bois, but I don't think that even the South have sent up any yet.

James, it is 2.30 and the old professor from the Sorbonne is folding up the *Matin*, the cat is nosing around knowing that I will give her the cream spoon to lick, Mdlle is scribbling the addition on the side of a rather tired menu, and—yes, I'll let you see—we've done ourselves damn' proud on 80 francs, tip included.

B'jour M'sieur, b'jour M'zelle, 'dame. You are a little pleasantly tired. So am I, and I want—if you will—to have my coffee on the terrace of Restaurant Weber—or if you insist, we will return to the Café de la Paix. BUT a taxi—down the Boulevard, Pont Alexandre, and that amazing jumble of the Concorde.

Enough, my dear James. Write, and write quickly more and lots more of Paris.

I enclose two bad and ridiculous drawings: one of Chaliapin at Fouguet's last December—he was looking very ill even then—and two, the Lady Chapel at Sacré Cœur. Oh, that view over Paris—a prayer in itself.

Forgive my boresomeness, but you've only yourself to blame for giving me the heartache.

Yours,

DONALD CALTHROP

April 27 Have spent much of to-day, when I ought to
Wednesday. have been working, reading in Jean Lorrain's
 long unprocurable *Poussières de Paris* lent
 me by Esmé Percy. A great deal about Sarah Bernhardt,
 but nothing detachable, except that Sarah has joined "le
 culte du Colonel Picquart." The date is June 5, 1899. (The
 second court-martial of Dreyfus began at Rennes on Aug. 7,
 same year.) On the previous day, at the races at Auteuil,
 the crowd had manifested against President Loubet: "Ce
 sont des scènes de pugilat, des injures, des gifles et des coups



Charlie Chaplin
By Donald Callthrop

de poing; des femmes frappent à coups d'ombrelles, on se traite de juif, de faussaire, d'Esterhazy, de Prussien et de Paty de Clam."

There is a grand description of Little Tich :

Jeudi 18 octobre (1900)—Onze heures du soir, à l'Olympia, Little Tich, le miraculeux des music-halls des Etats-Unis et des Trois-Royaumes, la grimace faite homme, l'humour dans le grotesque, le rire et l'esprit dans le fantômatique, Little Tich, génial de laideur et de souplesse étirée, avorton éffarant de contournements, Little Tich, gnôme échappé d'un 'Christmas Tale' de Dickens, gobelin et farfadet qu'on se figure très bien jouant à saute-mouton sur des comptoirs de bar qui seraient aussi des tombes; et ce sont des giques de White-Chapel et des pudeurs de M. Prudhomme, cachant sous un chapeau son pied déchaussé et là-dessus, des malices de lutin en goguette, des clignements d'yeux complices, des redressements de tout son être et des prétentions de petit homme à faire pouffer, Little Tich, qui ressemble à la fois à un Constantin Guys et à un Daumier.

Little Tich a abandonné cette fois sa silhouette de vanu-pieds de Londres, sa redingote effrangée, son pantalon en guenille et la prétention bien anglaise du camélia qui fleurissait ses haillons; il aborde une étonnante Espagnole, une frétilante et vertigineuse Manola de cauchemar, qui sous les longs accroche-cœurs se cambre, se déhanche, se déclanche et se tortille et tout à coup, empêtrée dans sa mantille, trébuche et s'étale par terre comme un pantin démantibulé; et la Manola se relève, boitille sur ses jambes tordues, et raide sur ses reins ankylosés, la danseuse promène sur la scène la misère grotesque d'un joujou faussé, jusqu'à la minute où gambillant sur la musique, cette parodie de l'Espagne se remet à mimer œillades et sourires, et terrible comme une des planches des 'Caprices,' véritable Goya animé, l'air à la fois d'un bouffon de cour et d'une vieille duègne, elle tourne sur elle-même comme une toupie humaine et disparaît, s'évanouit, grotesquement cambrée, fantastiquement hanchée, lubriquement hilare.

This book is made up of two years of Lorrain's diary, published as soon as it was written.

April 28 Thursday. It is a week since I saw Olivier's Coriolanus, and I cannot get his performance out of my head.

There is a very good reason why *Coriolanus* is not a favourite play with the modern actor. The reason is that the modern actor cannot play Coriolanus. It is not a part to be lisped and babbled through. It requires every kind of grandeur, which means that it can be played only in the grand manner. Vocally Olivier's performance is magnificent; his voice is gaining strength and resonance, and his range of tone is now extraordinary. Physically it is admirable, containing one startling leap and a superb fall at the end. But I wish Larry would abandon that make-up like a Javanese mask and trust more to his own features, which are now buried beneath too much loam and plaster. And why doesn't he stop that clowning which he probably thinks is mordancy? There is not much of this in the present performance, but what there is is wholly bad, since it turns rage to naughtiness. It is not right that Coriolanus, whose dignity should be pauseless and whose whole point is his refusal to truckle to the mob, should play even to the Old Vic's gallery. But all the same, I feel that this is Larry's best performance to date, for it has a pathos I have not yet observed in him. The playing in the great scene with mother, wife, and son has great tenderness. The famous speech "I banish you!" is delivered not in the Kean way of "ungovernable passion," but with Phelps's "cold sublimity of disdain." The end is the full organ of acting, with all the stops out.

If I am in two minds about Sybil's Volumnia it is because she herself is in two minds about the part. (Was Shakespeare?) In the first half Sybil beams and fusses like a seaside landlady getting on terms with her lodgers. Charles Young the actor says of Mrs Siddons's Volumnia that, when her son returned to Rome, "instead of dropping each foot, at equi-distance, in cadence subservient to the orchestra—with head erect, and hands pressed firmly to her bosom, as if to repress by manual force its triumphant swellings, she towered above all around her, and almost reeled across the

stage; her very soul, as it were, dilating and rioting in its exultation, until her action lost all grace, and, yet, became so true to nature, so picturesque, and so descriptive, that pit and gallery sprang to their feet, electrified by the transcendent execution of the conception." Sybil attempts nothing of this and, when her son returns, receives him with a look of tenderness which, however, is the bridge between her earlier humour and the Hecuba tap now turned on and kept running to the end.

April 29 A young American film-critic and friend of George *Friday*. Jean Nathan, name of Pare Lorentz, comes to lunch and entrances van Thal, Jock, and me with three hours of witty, unforced, un-shy talk. It appears that five days ago he was supping with George Jean Nathan, who said, "Why don't you get on the *Queen Mary* and go to lunch with James Agate?" He went straight from the supper-table to the boat, and is going back on her tomorrow. We like him tremendously. He says that Americans of the Middle West can't understand why England allows Italy to drop bombs on Spanish children. We tell him the reason is that England doesn't want Germany to drop bombs on English children. A good deal of talk about films, and the young man agrees that Laughton is too good an actor to screen well. *Charles acts too much*. Put a real beachcomber on the stage and he becomes unreal; put him in a film and he is real. Give Charles a beachcomber to act in a stage-play and he will be the fellow to the life. Give him a beachcomber to film and you can see him saying to himself, "What a jolly fellow this is! How well I am playing him!" The difference between stage and screen is that one is performance and the other being. A theatre audience looks to see acting; a film audience resents it. That is why my chauffeur says that a picture is more 'real' than a play. Lorentz came without luggage, but I am seeing to it that he goes back with *Ego* and *Ego 2*. A delightful man.¹

¹ I cull the following from an article in the *Times* as this book is going through the press: "*The River* is a documentary film of distinc-

May 1 On my return from Scotland in January I wrote *Sunday*. to young Galt, whose picture I had so much admired at Greenock, asking if he would do one for me. It arrived yesterday. It is a self-portrait, and the young man has had the sense to set himself a problem instead of doing something easy. At least, it seems to me that to make your picture out of a wet black mackintosh is a problem. I took it to the Redfern Gallery to be framed, and Rex Nankivell, and one or two other people who were knocking around, said it was masterly. They scouted my notion of the artist being a beginner. At the Academy Banquet last night I was so full of my new possession, which cost me 12 guineas, that I infected Eddie Marsh with my enthusiasm. There and then Eddie commissioned a picture, and agreed that the price should go up to 15 guineas. Whereupon Sir Ulick Alexander, Keeper of the Privy Purse, who was sitting on my other side, said, "What's this? Encouraging new talent? You can count me in as well. Tell the young man to send me anything he likes and I'll give him 20 guineas." Success comes to most people too late, and here is a young man beginning to realise his dream while he is still under the spell of it. They told me at the Gallery that he can make his £2000 a year in London as a portrait-

tion. It was made for the American Government by Mr Pare Lorentz, who also wrote the commentary, and it was sponsored by the Farm Security Administration of the Department of Agriculture. It is a film of purpose and value. Its effect—and the documentary film can have no greater virtue—has been to stir the social conscience of America; to impress upon the many who have seen it the gravity of a national problem and to inform them of the steps that are being taken to solve it. The river is the Mississippi, and from its trickling sources high up in the Rockies and the Alleghany, down to its calm majestic width at New Orleans, we are told the story of this great artery of American life and commerce, around which so much of the country's history has been made. It has been beautifully photographed with long, low horizons and high, cloudy skies, and the commentary flows as easily as the water itself, the speaker's rich voice finding poetry in the old familiar names of tributaries, towns, and trees—Natchez, New Orleans and St Louis, Cairo, Memphis and St Paul, great industrial centres and sleepy old Southern towns. The commentary has the even tenor of fine prose, its deliberate repetition giving added power to what is said, and the use of 'we' throughout must surely have aroused in the American listener that sense of personal responsibility which must have been the director's foremost aim. *The River* has been privately shown in London, and is being publicly exhibited throughout the United States free of charge."



Self-portrait
By Alex Galt

painter any time he wants. I shan't let him know this yet. His handwriting, spelling, and notepaper suggest humble circumstances, and for all I know his parents may be urging him to chuck his painting and go into the foundry. My picture is just a little prettier than the one I saw at Greenock, which has all the arresting boldness, the attractive ugliness of an early John. Perhaps the young man, being a Scot and canny, didn't quite trust the taste of his unknown London customer. With Eddie's and Sir Ulick's consent, I am telling him to let their pictures be as unpromising as he likes.

May 4 What do Japanese earthquakes or Chinese
Wednesday. floods mean to anybody reading about them
in Hampstead? The swallowing of Austria
needs bringing home to one who has never been even to
Vienna. Lunched to-day with Jock and John Rayner of the
Express at the Mirabell Restaurant, which has just been
kicked out of Salzburg and reopened in Curzon Street. The
very personable and well-educated young man who is run-
ning it showed me the old Visitors' Book, on whose first
page are the names of Reinhardt, Moissi, and Jannings.
Never can there have been a book of this kind so celebrity-
crammed, from heads crowned and uncrowned down to mere
fashionables and film-stars. Jock gazed long and rapturously
at the handwriting of Richard Strauss, and I confess to being
sentimental about "Edward, Hertzog von Windsor." Schus-
nigg was there also. To-day they started a new page headed
"London," and I was the first to sign. I won't pretend
this didn't tickle my vanity!

May 5 My post this morning contains a letter from
Thursday. Charles Morgan on the National Theatre.
Charles has been against this from the start, his
point being that the scheme is "financially unjust and artis-
tically dangerous." His letter was a reply to one of mine
anent the refusal of the *Times* to endow a seat for Walkley.
I pointed out that in addition to Clement Scott and Grein

seats have now been taken by Colonel Archer for his brother William, and by the Montague family for Montague. If no seat is taken for A.B.W. future generations will think that we did not appreciate him, and there will be nobody to explain why he was ignored. For a long time I too opposed this particular brand of National Theatre, but now I go back to the principle enunciated by the *Manchester Guardian* at the outbreak of the Great War. No paper had more vigorously opposed our coming in. Yet on the morning after war was declared the *M.G.* had a leading article on the theme of "The ranks close up!" Now that nothing can be done to dissuade the Committee from going on with the National Theatre I feel that opposition is out of place, and that the battering-ram should become the buttress. It is one thing to hold that it would have been better for a child if it had not been born; it is another thing to strangle it at birth.

In the afternoon I spoke at a meeting of the League of Audiences held at Toynbee Hall in support of the Music and Drama Bill. The Archbishop of Canterbury was in the chair, and in the front row was the President of Magdalen. I gave them a lot of facts about W.P.A., which is America's nearest approach to a National Theatre. Christie followed with a lot of figures from Glyndebourne, after which Simon Elwes told the meeting about the orchestra of unemployed musicians got together by Serge Krish. At its final concert last season this orchestra performed a symphony programme to a South-end audience of 8000 persons at 6d. a head. This season it is booked for 24 symphony concerts at the People's Palace. Now surely in an affair like this it is the facts and figures which matter? Politicians of every shade *must* agree that the principle of bringing the arts to the people is a good one. The important points are how much the people can afford to contribute towards having the arts brought to them, what balance of loss that must leave, and whether the Government can afford to make up that loss. The vital thing in this question is not eloquence but data. Yet I'll bet that tomorrow morning the *Times* reports only the Archbishop.

May 6 I was wrong. The *Times* reports the President of *Friday*. Magdalen as well as the Archbishop. Reprimanded Jock this morning for not having Boswell's *Johnson* at my elbow when I was writing an article on the Follies. He went to fetch it, and also defiantly brought *Manon Lescaut*, *John Gabriel Borkman*, and both volumes of Stekel's *Sexual Aberrations*! I have read the last and find them far less extraordinary than the mental aberrations of eminent journals which put the flowery before the factual.

May 7 A bitterly cold day. The English spring at its *Saturday*. most vitriolic. Lunched at Canuto's with Bertie van Thal looking more than ever like a sleek, well-groomed dormouse. He is assistant to Pommer, the film director. Pommer asks B. what he thinks of an idea, and B. says no good. Then B. submits a novel as possible film-fodder, and Pommer says not an earthly. After lunch we spent a couple of hours at Lord's, huddled together like polar bears awaiting the snow that never came. Left at the tea-interval, when we distinctly smelled the hot rum.

May 8 At Rome last night, after a banquet, Hitler and *Sunday*. Mussolini came out on to a balcony and were cheered by, according to the *Observer*, 500,000 people. Does anybody imagine that, if Germany had won the War, Neville Chamberlain and Daladier would to-day be allowed to take tea together or address a crowd of even 500 people? One doesn't know what methods Germany would have resorted to—sterilisation, alternate German fatherhood, armies of occupation. My view is that as a beginning they would have razed the Ford, Morris, and Austin motor-works and made everybody walk. The unblinkable fact is that we and France have made Germany stronger than ever, not because the Peace Terms were too harsh, but because they were not harsh enough. It's no good saying to a mad dog: We'll allow you to go on being a little mad. The fault is that of misplaced idealism. Free Trade is no use unless everybody adopts it. Ditto disarmament. Ditto the League

of Nations. The grand mistake is the idealist one of believing that human nature is better than it is, or is likely to become better in reckonable time. I have never held a brief for Northcliffe, but he was right when he said, and said often: "You must watch those Germans. They will cheat you yet!" They have cheated us, and with our connivance!

May 10 It is now more than twenty years since I first *Tuesday*. and last heard *Elektra*, and I remember thinking that if it were now to die no place would please me more than the opera-house among the choice and master noises of the age. I thought so again last night. How Charles, Ivor, and the quietist bunch would hate this orgy of intensive theatre! How they would despise Rose Pauly, who at the end of the opera, instead of moping in a corner Bergner-wise, prances about the stage with her knee exactly where the horse Spotlight puts his when he is pulling out his best. At the culminating point she added her arms, and Jock said, "Rachel," and I said, "Siddons." There wasn't a cough throughout the two hours' length of the opera, coughing—as theatre managers ought to know, but don't—coming from the fact that the audience can't hear. There is no suggestion that you can't hear *Elektra*. As we came out I heard somebody say, "If that hasn't split the atom nothing will!"

May 11 Here is a bit of Neville Cardus on *Elektra*, *Wednesday*. which I quote for other reasons besides agreeing with it. I am so tired of people who like my articles only when they reflect their views. I want to hear somebody say, "That was a damned fine article, James. I disagreed with every word of it."

The work is a masterpiece of brutality. Nietzsche once said that the music of Wagner was a sequence of gestures. Strauss's music in *Elektra* is a sequence of gesticulations, not to say of gibberings. The orchestra pursues the singers like a fury crowned with snakes; it writhes and hisses, and seems to leave a slime in its track. The huge orchestra is

a cancer of spreading parts or polyphony. There is no peace, no point of rest, until towards the end, where Elektra recognizes Orestes; then the music suddenly modulates to the beer-garden sentimentality of the 'echt,' or true, Strauss. The organisation of the score is still a matter to wonder at. Now and again Strauss drives his machine magnificently. But frequently his scoring is merely so many mannerisms, Straussian clichés. We hear wood-wind figuration that means nothing that is not tootling. And divided strings divide by habit. At such moments we are irritated exactly as poor Schiller was irritated by the way Mme de Staël continually twiddled a fragment of paper between her fingers.

Cardus develops this, and ends with the coda: "To do him justice, Strauss can make the most gorgeous noises, whether significant or not of anything at all."

Which is exactly the point. Like Strauss, Cardus is even better to listen to than to read. His Traddles-like openness of countenance, his rich and ghoulish humour, and his unending enthusiasm would make him a grand companion even at the North Pole. The next-best thing to music is hearing Cardus talk about it, late at night, when he is well on in his second bottle of Richebourg.

After the hullabaloo I found the tweetings of some Glyndebourne singers rather tame. But perhaps even arch-Mozartians do not get excited about how Papageno picked a peck of pickled Papagenas. The occasion was in honour, and support, of Toynbee Hall. It wound up with Barrie's *Shall We Join the Ladies?* about which Jock quietly reminds me that I wrote in 1922: "If this were the work of an undistinguished author I should call it plain rubbish. I will content myself with distinguished rubbish." What matters is not whether, in those far-away *Saturday Review* days, I was what Cinderella's Policeman called "infallayble." What is important is that I made my own guns and stuck to them.

May 16 A lot of lunching and supping—Eddie Marsh,
Monday. Clifford Bax, Robert Sherwood, Hamish Hamilton. Talked so much that there is nothing to

record, except Eddie's story of the little boy who was taken to the Open Air Theatre and said, "Mummy, I'll tell you when I'm tired of this, and it's now!"

May 17 Ernest Thesiger sends me as a contribution to
Tuesday. the Villa Volpone a sketch made by him of Réjane in *Sapho*, and signed by her.

May 18 In reply to my letter asking for some informa-
Wednesday. tion about himself, young Galt writes:

I have completed at the age of twenty-five five years in the Glasgow School of Art, and six distasteful months training as a Teacher of Arts. This leaves me to decide whether to be an artist, which has always been my ambition, or just a school-teacher. I have had another success. When I wrote to you in my last letter, I had just returned from Edinburgh after competing for a Travelling Scholarship at the Royal Scottish Academy. I managed to win first place, and now I am planning a short tour abroad. I have been drawing ever since I was able to hold a pencil. After the usual schooling, I enabled myself to attend an Art School by working on the Clyde Steamers during the summer. Although I am youngest of a family my home is never really a quiet place. As for pictures, I believe I have painted hundreds. I destroy those I get tired of, or take up too much room. Others find a home in the houses of friends.

May 19 Major Jones sends me a copy of George Vanden-
Thursday. hoff's rare *Green-room and Stage* (1865). My father often saw G.V., and described him as "a great bellowing tragedian, and very fine." Vandenhoff was originally intended for the Bar, to which he ultimately returned, breaking off in full tide of success, marrying an American lady, and in New York resuming his former profession. The young man saw Kean and sat on Kemble's knee; the grown actor dislikes Macready and insists on calling him the "Eminent," after the manner of Mr Wemmick and his "Aged P." If I had known of this book when I wrote my little *Life of Rachel* I should certainly have quoted:



Rejane
By Ernest Thesiger

This was Rachel's great want: *she had no love in her*; I mean love properly so called: of the baser passion, its bastard brother, she had more than enough; but of the pure, unselfish, self-sacrificing love of a virtuous woman she knew nothing; it was out of her dictionary; she had no expression for it; it did not seem to enter into the catalogue of her received sensations. She had scorn, irony, rage, despair, passion, but no love; unless the heat of a tigress be love. Such was her Phædra, but what would she have done with Imogen or Juliet? Bah! she would have degraded them to mere impersonations of animal passion, or voluptuous *cynisme*. This is the point, too, in which Ristori, the Italian tragédienne, so far surpasses the French one; in loving sweetness, the outgushing of a trustful, unselfish woman's heart. Rachel might make you wonder at her energy, her fire, her demoniacal intensity; Ristori makes you weep with her, and love her by her nobleness, her depth of feeling, and its feminine expression. Even in Medea, the character which Rachel refused to play, Ristori is a woman; outraged, injured, revengeful, maddened with her wrongs, but still a woman: Rachel would have made her a tigress, or a fiend.

May 20 Cochran returned to the fray last night with a *Friday*. revue of great beauty and a personal triumph for

Beatrice Lillie. In the interval some woman preceding me up the gangway bestrewed it with furs, laces, ribbons, and what-not. After my fifth retrieval I said, "Dear lady, you are behaving exactly like Miss Lillie." She said, "Why not? I'm her sister!"

May 28 Here is what I am saying on Sunday about the *Monday*. Irving Centenary *Matinée*:

Never until this *matinée* had I understood how anybody could go to the stake. But then never until that moment had I come across a principle worth going to the stake for. I mean worth *my* going, not the going of some medieval loony in a nightshirt. Must I believe that black is white? Very well then, black is white. Must I agree that two and two make five? Charmed! That the earth is flat? *Cela se peut*. That water runs up-hill? *Je n'y vois pas d'inconvénient*.

But the supremacy of the player is another matter. That is what stakes are for.

The *matinée* was in honour of the greatest actor any of us has seen or is likely to see. It was finely inspired, ingeniously designed, magnificently organised, beautifully pageantried, and executed by the players of to-day with a cheerful resignation beyond all praise. One by one they went to annihilation as determinedly as Charles I went to the scaffold. "Remember Irving!" each seemed to say with a look in the tail of his eye which signified, "And for heaven's sake forget about us! This isn't our job, and we know it."

"We are mighty fine fellows nowadays," said Stevenson in effect, "but we cannot write like Hazlitt." The actors of to-day are mighty fine fellows, but they cannot act like Irving. It was a mistaken kindness to insist that they should try, and that is what appearing in the old rôles amounted to. What about the suggestion that they were not imitating Irving but giving their own interpretations? This is too naïve. You cannot *interpret* Liszt's *Studies in Transcendent Execution*; you can only execute them transcendently. You cannot be capricious about Paganini's *Caprices*; the notes are there to be played, and that is all. Similarly you cannot 'interpret' characters like Mathias and Dubosc; there is nothing to be discovered about them. They are parts which yield everything to a great actor and nothing to a middling one. Whoever plays Mathias must get as much effect out of shaking the snow from his coat as Lear does by shaking his daughters' scoldings from his soul; Richard wading through slaughter to a throne must not be more effective than Dubosc paddling in the post-boy's blood. So don't let us have any nonsense! He who cannot bend the bow of Ulysses should leave it alone; he cannot get away with tweaking the string and calling that a new interpretation.

I never saw Irving's *Jingle*, but my father used to tell me that it was a mixture of intellectual ascendancy and gentlemanly sad-doggishness. Mr Olivier made him an Elizabethan cut-purse who would have been happy in the company of Pistol, Bardolph, and Nym. In other words, Irving's *Jingle* could have sat at Mr Pickwick's table; Mr Olivier's couldn't. Yet Mr Olivier is an admirable actor.

Somebody complained that in the excerpt from *The Bells*, whereas the wind outside was blowing hard, the cycloramic snow fell in flakes as vertical as the spots on a curtain. I didn't mind that; it is a mark of the present age to invent a thing and then not know how to use it. I did not mind when Mr Tearle came in without even one of the myriad flakes through which he had plodded. What I did mind was the way he took off his gaiters. He took them off like an ordinary man, whereas Irving took them off like an extraordinary man. About this simple action Mr Gordon Craig has written: "Now you might think that the act of taking off some boots could be done one way only—but the way Irving did it had never been thought of till he did it, and has never been done since. It was, in every gesture, every half move, in the play of his shoulders, legs, head, and arms, mesmeric in the highest degree. . . ."

Or you might put it that the difference between Irving's fingers and those of Mesmer was this: When Mesmer came fingers acquired a new art; when Irving went they lost it. And why didn't one feel drawn to Mr Tearle's Mathias? Why was one not fascinated—mesmerised, if you will? Yet Mr Tearle too is an admirable actor.

Of Irving's Charles I, Ellen Terry, writing, like Hazlitt, categorically, says: "However often I played that last scene with him, I knew that when he first came on he was not aware of my presence nor of any *earthly* presence: he seemed to be already in heaven." On Monday Mr Nares arrived in the pink of earthly condition, as though he had not undergone any trial greater than that of sitting to Vandyck. Yet Mr Nares is an admirable actor.

No one will accuse me of underrating the talents of Mr Lawson. Yet about his Dubosc my displeasure actively gathered. Why didn't somebody tell Mr Lawson how Irving threw open that window, lay on the floor on his stomach drumming with his toes and hurling imprecations and flower-pots at the crowd below? And where was the extraordinary rumble which Irving managed to keep going throughout the scene, like a ground-bass? Yet Mr Lawson, again, is an admirable actor.

Mr Farquharson gave one the impression of having seen Irving's Louis XI, and this was admirable in this actor. Contrariwise Mr Richardson gave one the impression of

not having seen anybody's Becket! What had become of all that subtlety and pride, and how did Mr Richardson hope to replace it by honesty and forthrightness? One must think that this clever player would never have essayed Becket of his own free will. Nature has given this actor many qualities. But she has not given him the quality of a prelate, or of any kind of monk save those who in the old comic operas trowl bonny bowls. Yet Mr Richardson too is an admirable actor.

But so are they all, all admirable actors in their own kind. The trouble is that their kind and Irving's kind don't mix. With this further difficulty that departures from their kinds meet with vastly different results. Obviously Irving would have wholly ruined a play like, say, *Eden End*; mark, however, that Irving would have remained intact, the only thing in smithereens being Mr Priestley's play. Whereas when your team-actor attempts to transform himself into a virtuoso both play and actor perish, because without the actor there is no play. The point is dealt with by Mr Craig: "Frédéric Lemaître took *L'Auberge des Adrets*, which was a sinister little drama, a plain-sailing trifle, such as went down with the public—went down in the strict sense of the words, as a ship sinks and is lost for ever; but Lemaître rigged it out anew, and it came sailing in as though it were a Spanish galleon. Paris was astounded." So, if Irving were alive, would all these old plays come sailing in like Spanish galleons, and London would be once more astounded.

And Irving himself? It may give young people some true notion of what he was like if I say that his aloofness would have been untouched even by all this incense. Let me remind them of Mr Beerbohm's account of seeing the old man in a brougham on his way to catch the train to Windsor on the day he was to be knighted: "His hat was tilted at more than its usual angle, and his long cigar seemed longer than ever; and on his face was a look of such ruminant, sly fun as I have never seen equalled." He was preserving, says Max, "in the glare of fame that quality of mystery which is not essential to genius, but which is the safest insurance against oblivion." How would he have behaved if he could have been present on Monday afternoon? I imagine that he would have said to the young actors who were re-creating him what he

once said to the brawling Montagues and Capulets striving to impress him : " Very good, me b'ys. But don't fidget ! "

May 24 Went with Peter Page last night to *Rosen-Tuesday*. *kavalier*. Three-quarters of an hour too long.

Peter very merry : " You know those hearthrugs and things Melchior wears in *Siegfried*? He told me yesterday he shoots 'em himself in the Rockies ! "

May 25 Another letter from an old, anonymous friend : *Wednesday*.

DEAR DUCKIE,

I'm sending you a modest viola and a quotation : " Sir Robert Walpole talked bawdy after dinner so that all could join in."

A noisy aeroplane is doing some Sunday practice. But I do not think I am air-minded, so cannot appreciate their point of view. I've always thought aeroplanes were a case of necessity in the War, and should have been treated as such when the War was over.

I entirely agree that it's worth paying a big price for less poverty and more happiness. But won't the standardisation of the individual destroy a great deal of the charming unexpectedness?

Let's go to the Zoo, shall we?

NOBBY

May 30 Week-end at Brighton was so wet that I took a *Monday*. private sitting-room and worked. Motored home *via* Salisbury to give Julian Phillipson his first sight of Stonehenge. At Chichester, the rain coming down so hard that we could scarcely see the landscape, J.P. suggested we should each compose a sonnet. By the time we got to Southampton we had produced two pastiches, I in that vein of early Shakespeare which purblind professors write books to deny, and Julian after the manner of the minor Elizabethans :

Full many a leaden day have I been fain
Upon thy bosom, lord, my last to sigh,
Holding it bliss to be by worship slain,
And on that secure ground in peace to lie,

Yet pride forebore : till thou thyself should'st give
 Some sign to know my passion¹ is not spurned
 I still must patient be, condemned to live
 A sentinel where I would be inurned.
 Yet this I know, that though thy brow doth lower,
 And this I tell thee spite thy temples' wrack,
 The brightest sun 'scapes not the west'ring hour,
 So at the last my wish shall nothing lack.
 Upon thy breast I in my extreme dearth
 Shall cumber thee, poor clod on thy rich earth.

J. A.

Thy voice to me is as a madrigal
 Which falls upon mine ears so that I fain
 Would linger in thy music. Ah, not all
 The rack's sharp torment reaches to my pain
 Now thou art gone. Did'st thou but softly call
 Upon the winds bring me thy voice again,
 Or bid the echo of the hills enthrall
 My sense, departed, sweet, I would remain
 Contented. So within this darkened hall,
 I wait for unheard notes to drop like rain
 And drown me in thy beauty. Fall, fall, fall!
 Then, be sleep final, how should I complain?
 Nor winds nor echo hear her wanton voice,
 Only to him she speaks, her unfaithd choice.

J. H. P.

June 4 With great generosity and on the principle that
Saturday. every crown should possess at least one diamond,
 Jock makes me a present for *Ego 8* of this superb
 letter from Edward. I know hundreds of people who have
 more talent than my brother, but nobody through whose
 mind genius whistles more nakedly. Carpers will say,
 "Genius for what?" And I answer, "In his case, perhaps
 nothing. And I don't think it matters." Here's the letter :

12 *Lynette Avenue*

Clapham Common, S.W.4

June 8rd, 1938

MY DEAR JOCK,

Carlyle tells us that parts of the Koran were written on
 shoulder-blades of mutton ; so I am not going to apologise

¹ According to the bespectacled brood, the word 'passion' in Shakespeare's time meant no more than 'literary effusion.' Hence a 'passion spurned' is merely a rejected MS. The reader is therefore at liberty to regard my poem as addressed with nice prescience to one of Shakespeare's editors.

for my writing-paper. My landlady thanks Mr Agate for his cheque, and, risking the rebuke that she should mind her own business, wonders what becomes of his old clothes; as her dustman would be ashamed to go about like Mr Edward. And I believe it. I have one shirt; it is on my back, and has been for three weeks. I daren't remove it or it would fall to pieces in the process. When finally it shuffles off me I shall go to bed and stop there till the undertaker brings me another. It can't be so very long now—ten or fifteen years in the nature of things—which will be gone in a flash. *Sur ces entrefaites* I will make one final grand effort. Some years ago James said to me, "If I were in your position I would never be off publishers' doorsteps. I should march into their offices, tell 'em what I can do, say I'm starving, and add, 'What about it?'" So on Monday I shall walk down to the West End, or any other end infested by these people, and start the quest. I shall avoid Gollancz, Hamilton, Barker, Cape, Chapman and Hall, Heinemann, Constable, Howe, and other publishers who I know have had dealings with James. I shall not say I am starving, for that would not be true; and, if asked, I shall admit being gratefully in receipt of a monthly pittance. I shall begin with the Porcupine Press, as being most suitable to my state of mind. If I am at a loss for words I shall let my shirt speak for me. Pray God it doesn't rain!

I have just finished one quarter of the stupendous Gibbon. At which point I shall make what Italian musicians call "*lunga pausa*," before proceeding with the other three quarters. Ultimately, I propose to pass some strictures on the work from the point of view of style—"proper words in proper places," as (I think) Dryden called it. You will remember Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*, in which he and Southey criticise *Paradise Lost* much to the disgust of De Quincey. I propose to take a similar line.

Some day, when you have made your money and retired, I have a book for you to write: *The History of Comic Literature since 1800*. The standard work on the subject, quoted by every one, is *Geschichte der Komischen Literatur*, by C. F. Floegel, but he died round about 1790, and the theme has never been pursued further. I have read here and there in his book in the Museum. It is

an old torn and tattered copy bound with string. I like to think it is the copy Carlyle and Hallam handled.

I have been reading Thiers's monument of patience, *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, in English, or I should say, one volume of it. It is the worst translation I ever saw. "*Always knowing how to occupy himself, and to occupy others, he captivated to the highest pitch, and dissipated around him those irksome sensations, or prevented their having birth, to which he himself was utterly foreign.*" "*He imagined that it would be the full measure of success and goodness, to terminate the matter in this way.*" Translate back again "word to word," and you get excellent French. O tush! And so it goes on through ten thick volumes—an absolute waste of time and money. Publisher, Chatto and Windus, 1875. And reprinted 1898! If Florio or Smollett, Urquhart or Melmoth, ever look at it in the reference library of heaven, they will stare! Nonobstanting, the book is most interesting.

A short time ago I picked up, for a few pence, two well-bound and mossy volumes of Bishop Burnet's *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*. Unreadable? Oh, no! Listen! "I liked her before not well, but now I like her much worse. She has ill smells about her. I have felt her belly and her breasts, and, as I can judge, she should be no maid" (Henry VIII to the Lord Cromwell, the morning after the marriage with Anne of Cleves).

From the defence of Catherine Howard at her trial: "As for carnal knowledge, I confess that divers times he [Dereham] hath lain with me, sometimes in his doublet and hose, and two or three times naked: but not so naked that he had nothing upon him; for he had always at the least his doublet, and as I do think, his hose also; but I mean naked, when his hose were put down." Delicious equivocation of woman! If Mr Bax had incorporated *that* into his *Rose without a Thorn*, his play would have been still more sprightly.

During the years 1986, 1987, and 1988 there fall the anniversaries of the birth or death of Erasmus, Ben Jonson, James Mill, Pushkin, Boileau, Frobisher, Gibbon, Lady Jane Grey, J. R. Green, Pergolesi, Swinburne, Malebranche, Cuvier, Talleyrand, Gambetta, and Herschel. I do not remember the B.B.C. to have risen to the occasion once. And perhaps they are right. The Englishman does

not want to hear a ten minutes' talk on Jonson or Gibbon. He prefers to accord a two minutes' silence to a football trainer who died recently in the North.

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Neander, in his *Life of Christ*, supposes that Pilate asked the question "What is truth?" in a depreciatory sense and with a shrug of the shoulders; for, if it had been meant as a direct question, we may be sure that Christ would have improved the occasion, whereas He answered not at all.

Hallam is daring enough to point out that the much-belauded English Bible, in its present form, may or may not be the perfection of our English language; but it is certainly not the language of the reign of James I. "It is not the English of Raleigh or Bacon. Further, it abounds with obsolete phraseology and with single words long since abandoned or retained only in provincial use." And I, myself, have found "they have hedged me about, that I cannot get out." How this bit of jingle was passed by 47 bishops beats me!

Yours ever,

EDWARD

June 5 With a great deal of dovetailing and contrivance,
Sunday. which means bribing Jock to do some of my work,

I managed to get the last half of the week clear for the National Show, held this year at Bournemouth. Started off with Julian Phillipson about tea-time on Wednesday. (His father is well-to-do, and the idea is to get him interested in Hackneys.) Just the other side of the New Forest, in which the trees had been motionless, we ran into a gale worse than one of Leo Pavia's tempers. The Royal Counties Show, of which the Hackney Show is now a part, is most unlucky in respect of weather. At Weymouth in 1985 the show was flooded out, the horses in their boxes being over the fetlocks in water. When we got to the show-ground on Wednesday the roofs of the tents were sailing about the sky and great timbers cracking like match-sticks. Fortunately the stabling turned out to be solid, and to make

assurance doubly sure the stud grooms barricaded front and rear with their motor horse-boxes. As the evening wore on the storm increased, Albert telling me next day that nobody in the yard slept a wink.

Thursday was Sonnet's classes, and his showing in them convinced Albert and me—he was last in hand and eighth in harness—that he has had enough time and money spent on him and must now be scrapped. He is another of those minor catastrophes, an exquisite pony, but lacking in that virtuosity which the modern ring calls for; if it were there Albert would have brought it out by now. Let's hope the pony-mind doesn't know the difference between the buggy and the greengrocer's cart. The same fate, alas, also awaits Rose Knight, for which, since he is a bigger animal, I predict the laundry van! But I'm quite philosophic about it. It is just a case of "two of our failures," as Brummell's valet said about his master's cravats.

Volpone didn't quite do what we expected. "I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth," says Hamlet. Volpone had certainly lost his. Perhaps the long journey and the gale upset him, and again he may have outgrown his strength. Anyhow he was sour and sulky when he came into the ring, and sourer and sulkier when he left it with the third rosette. As he isn't going to make a stallion, we shall now alter him, turn him out, and let the sun get at his back.

Once more Ego must measure himself against his old enemy Nanette. His battles with this grand mare began two years ago, and she must have beaten him on some dozen occasions, though on four of them the decision was, to say the least of it, doubtful. Last year I thought we had the horse a little too fat, and Albert spent the winter fining him down to make him look as he did on his first appearance at Olympia—a piece of Greek sculpture. On Friday the omens were favourable. None of the judges was on my Black List—every Hackney exhibitor knows what that means—and I knew we should not come up against one of those Hogarthian fellows, nine-tenths suavity and the rest inso-

lence, with squiny eyes—Lear's word—set in a face of deceit bland and unwinking as an eight-day clock. Lean over the rails and you can hear the tick of their nasty thoughts.

On Friday the tussle did not last long. Ego came in looking superb. His lack of inches—for he is barely 14.1—means that he can never have the majesty of Viking or Spotlight. But the general consensus of opinion is that he has more elegance and more charm than any other animal in the show-ring. Nanette followed him in, and for the first time I thought that she showed signs of becoming an old lady. She is thirteen, having done as many years of hard showing as Ego, who is seven, has years in all. This is the place to pay a tribute to this great mare, perhaps the greatest at her height the world has ever known. Her liberty and range have always been extraordinary, and the fights between her and Ego have always resolved themselves into the age-long dispute between dash and force of action in one animal and purity of action combined with poise and balance in the other. On Friday there was an air of the departing champion meeting the new, and in the show-ring as in the boxing it is always something of a tragedy when a champion's colours are lowered. This does not mean that I think Nanette is finished; Ego will doubtless find that there are plenty of kicks left in the old mare, whose courage is still boundless. When it has been touch-and-go between them, to see Nanette come up the grand-stand with George Lancaster getting every ounce out of her has always given me the thrill which belongs to any hateful and glorious spectacle. On Friday the judges sent them round the ring twice and then once up and down. All was over, and Ego had won.

Much depended on this victory, including the dedication to this book. An old Saturday Reviewer once laid it down that whenever a work of art concerns itself with buried treasure, that treasure must be found. If Ego hadn't found his treasure, then, as a former Saturday Reviewer, I must have been constrained to cut him out of this diary, which would still have been dedicated to him. But to you who read that

dedication would have been invisible. I am conscious that you are probably saying, "What a fuss to make about a horse!" If the reader who says a horse is only a horse happens to be a poet, I shall reply that to a horseman a poet is only a poet. Looking up what I wrote on this theme in another book, I find that I quoted: "He who has done a single thing that others never forget, and feel ennobled whenever they think of, need not regret his having been, and may throw aside this fleshly coil, like any other worn-out part, grateful and contented." Whatever eminence I might have risen to as a dramatic critic, it would have been all the same in a hundred years. Nay, in ten years, a month, on Monday morning—for dramatic criticism perishes before the ink is dry. But this can never be taken from me, that on a day in March I saw an unbroken pony shivering under a hedge, and that I had the eye to sense his quality and the wit to buy him. If ever I could conceive myself throwing aside this fleshly coil with anything approaching content, it would be because I had the ingenuity, in the high Roman sense, to bring to victory a little horse which, in his own lifetime, became legend.

June 12 All my life certain names have had a strange *Sunday*. power of attraction for me. I do not believe any newspaper has ever printed the name Sarah Bernhardt without my seeing it. Similarly with Rimbaud. Somewhere in the nineties my brother Edward, returning from his first trip to Paris, brought back with him a slim volume of poems printed in thick black ink on coarse paper. The name on the back was Rimbaud. I can still repeat a stanza out of a poem whose title I have forgotten :

Nous regagnerions le village
 Au ciel mi-noir
 Et ça sentirait le laitage
 Dans l'air du soir.

I don't suppose I should have thought of this to-day if, looking through the *Observer*, the word "Rimbaud" had not caught my eye. The article was a review of Enid Starkie's

new *Life*: "Poor putrid Verlaine and Rimbaud . . . the idiot boy who perished in his vanity . . ."

The reviewer is our Mr Wolfe.

June 14 I have been formally invited by the Deutsche *Tuesday*. Akademie to attend a Festival on behalf of "the Art and Culture of the Contemporary German Theatre." The Festival will see the first performance of Richard Strauss's latest opera, *Der Friedenstag*, which, it is thought, will be a further inducement to visit Munich. I have replied as follows:

DEAR DEUTSCHE AKADEMIE,

I am obliged to you for your invitation, which I must decline in the most emphatic manner possible.

My mother was educated in Germany, and I have been accustomed to hearing German from the cradle. All my life I have found my best friends among Germans. I have spent half my leisure time listening to German music. I immensely admire all that Germany has achieved since the War.

But I will not set foot in your country so long as you persecute Jews. We will not argue whether this is an offence before God; it is an abomination in the sight of man. I regret to have to write like this. But I feel deeply on the subject, as do hundreds of thousands of Englishmen who, like myself, have no drop of Jewish blood in their veins.

Yours faithfully,

JAMES AGATE

June 15 Spent a wretched day at the Royal Norfolk *Wednesday*. Show, sitting on a stand, muffled up, *with tonsillitis*, watching Ego make a fool of himself. This was the first time he and Nanette had met since his great win at the National. Obviously George Lancaster would shake the old mare up, which he did magnificently; I never saw her go better. Ego could not be said to go even badly; he 'broke' all round the ring and never once dropped on his legs. It was not a show at all.

This was all the more disappointing because Geoffrey Bennett was judging, and last week's issue of the *Horse and Hound* showed what he thought of Ego at the National:

The open class for horses under 14 hands 2 in. was notable for the meeting of two great celebrities in Mrs Henriques's Fleetwood Nanette, winner of more than a hundred prizes in the eight years she has been showing, and Mr James Agate's Ego, now seven years old, the Dublin champion of 1986, and always a favourite with the public since his début in 1985. Nanette is a wonderful mare and has preserved her dash to a remarkable degree for her thirteen years, and she still uses her hocks as brilliantly as ever, but Mr Agate's delightful little son of Talke Bonfire has the more beautiful contour and carriage, and rounds his knee more effectively than his rival. He now went with more force than I have yet seen him display in a ring, and so thoroughly earned his victory, a fact which Mrs Henriques was the first to recognise in the most spontaneous and generous fashion. Ego is undoubtedly the best of the many good animals which Mr Agate has owned, and he must have a great career.

But Bennett, besides being a superb writer on the horse, is also a fine and completely honest judge. He gave Ego every chance, and, when the horse persistently refused to settle, put him down to third place. When he came out of the ring Bennett asked me whether I thought he had done right. I told him he had done wrong, and that on that show Ego's place was bottom of the class.

June 16 Showed my displeasure with Ego by staying Thursday. away from the Staffordshire County Show. As

I was dressing for Ivor Novello's *Comedienne* Albert 'phoned to say that Ego won easily, making a brilliant show.

June 18 I am becoming very like Wagner with my trick Saturday. of getting people to work for me. Now it's Phillipson's turn. What I like about Julian is that he doesn't know everything. In the last three days I



*Laurence Olivier and Sybil Thorndike in
"Coriolanus"*

have discovered that he hadn't realised that Ouida was a woman, had never heard of Chadband, didn't know that "On, Stanley, on" were the last words of Marmion, and had never read *Love in a Valley*. On the other hand, he has read nearly all Browning and knows Arnold's *Empedocles on Etna* practically by heart. And he is enormously intelligent, which is the reason why I have called him in to help type and titivate my new book. This is a 40,000-words masterpiece on the subject of *Bad Manners*.

Just as I am going to bed Albert 'phones to say that Ego, whom I have not yet forgiven, won first and champion cup at West Bromwich to-day.

June 19 Have started a brand-new phobia which is so *Sunday*. terrifying that I haven't dared to tell anyone about it. Sitting in the car, I add up the numbers on the plates of the cars in front, and tremble when they come to thirteen. I do this quite mechanically, chatting away to whoever is in the car. How I am going to get rid of this nonsense I just don't know.

In the evening Julian drove George Mathew and me to Windsor. Long argument as to whether Windsor Great Park is better than Versailles. Forget which way we settled it. Supper at the Old House Hotel, and glad to see that the improvements haven't spoiled it.

June 28 Chorus of pot and kettle. Gave a small luncheon *Thursday*. party at the Étoile in Charlotte Street, for the purpose of introducing Julian Phillipson to Leo Pavia. Leo said afterwards, "I like that young man, who is a Jew even if he did go to Cambridge. There is a bond between us. We both hate Jews!" (Julian, of course, doesn't do anything of the sort.) But then Leo has always maintained that it was a Jew who invented Anti-Semitism!

June 24 The Test Match. Sat next to an old gent. from the *Friday*. shires, who, judged by a vast gold bangle he was wearing, might easily have been taken for an

elderly sissy by anybody failing to notice that he was blue with cubbing.

June 25 The Test Match again. During a dullish period *Saturday*. I evolve a cure for the new phobia. This is to add up the numbers on the plates and to be annoyed when they *don't* come to thirteen.

June 26 The *News of the World* drops into poetry :
Sunday.

Hammond was to Ames
As London is to Staines.

June 27 Again Lord's, where once more I sit next to my *Monday*. friend of the shires. Still the bangle, but also an incredibly horsy bowler and a hurricane pipe, which the old gentleman lights from a tinder-box. Once I hear him speak, and it is like the neigh of a worn-out stallion.

June 28 Lord's for the last day of the Test Match. On the *Tuesday*. way I note that the new phobia cure works.

June 29 The best thing on E. V. Lucas, who died on *Wednesday*. Sunday, appears, of course, in the *Manchester Guardian*. The young man who writes it says :

Sometimes a man, in writing of another, gives his own best epitaph. Of a contemporary Lucas once said : "When, if ever the time comes—and long may it be delayed—to chisel words on the tombstone that covers all that is mortal—to whatever high-sounding eulogy may be then engraved these five monosyllables should be added : *He was out for fun*. He did this and that supremely well. His friends were legion. His mind was electrically instant to respond to any sympathetic suggestion. He never broke his word. He never let you know if he was tired. And, with it all, he was out for fun."

In these words he spoke also of himself.

After the ceremony at Golders Green—at which there was no religious service, no music, and only a few words by Eddie Knoblock, who read, not very well, Kipling's poem

about Sussex—I changed into the liveliest of my new suits, with pink shirt and strawberry tie, and took Peter Page and Jock to lunch at the Jardin des Gourmets. Peter told me that under the name of “F. W. Mark” E.V. wrote a lot of sketches for Harry Tate, whom he admired enormously.

July 8 E. V. Knox, Max, and Desmond are all good *Sunday*. about E.V. in the *Sunday Times*, though I feel that anybody reading a hundred years hence will gather no more than that he was the production, in Euclidean sense, of Charles Lamb. Swinnerton, in the *Observer*, is much nearer the truth when he talks about E.V. being “a grimly unhappy man.” And again when he writes: “He knew so much, was so unshockable.” And again about his “unprinted knowledge of life, books, and human beings.” Expand this to include E.V.’s *unprintable* knowledge and you get somewhere near that “combination of Montaigne and Rabelais” which was Jock’s summing-up. And even that isn’t all. I have an idea that the serenity of the writer was a mask hiding the torments of a man knowing as much about hell as any of Maupassant’s characters, or even Maupassant himself. I met E.V. only rarely. But I admired him from the day I first read him, recognising the quality of the born writer, and they tell me at the *S.T.* that he was one of my staunchest defenders.

July 4 Jock says he has started a novel whose heroine is *Monday*. a Miss Adelaide Road.

July 5 Went with Julian to the revival of the film *Tuesday*. *A Farewell to Arms*. When at the end they began to play the *Liebestod* Julian turned to me and said, “These Hollywood blokes certainly know how to get the right sort of music written for their films.”

July 6 It is remarkable how the people I discourage *Wednesday*. do well, and how those I try to help either fail or fade away. I did my best to dissuade Alan

Parsons from becoming a journalist, and Robert Speaight and Reginald Tate from becoming actors. All these three spurned my advice, and look what a success they made! Now consider the people I've tried to help since this diary started, beginning with Tait and Allott! Noel Coward said: "Those young men ought to have realised that the pattern of your book demanded a triumph from them. Your little horse saw that much when he won the championship at Dublin!" And now, from Dublin, comes this letter, not announcing failure, but, I firmly believe, heralding another kind of success. I have replied to Conders telling him to call his novel *The Ugly Duckling Who Turned Up Trumps*. Anyhow, here is the letter:

Claverton
Elton Park
Sandycove
Co. Dublin, Ireland
July 5th, 1938

DEAR MR AGATE,

Assuming you remember me, a million apologies for not writing sooner. (If you don't remember me, a million apologies just the same.) Blatantly ignoring your wise advice, I am back in the wilds instead of making a fortune in the city. Actually I meant to do as you suggested, but circumstances interfered. And anyway I was tired of fiddling around with little scraps of work and wanted something solid achieved—however terrible. At the moment, then, I am floundering through a novel. Yes, I know it's at least ten years too early for me to attempt such a thing, but I can't help that. Don't look for anything prodigious; it's pretty unimportant intrinsically, though personally it will prove something—if it ever gets itself done. It's still a depressing distance from completion.

The Abbey Theatre exists by a series of improbable miracles. First Sean O'Casey came along and rescued it from looming disaster, and now, with all hope apparently gone, Colum and Dunsany forgotten and the stage given over to the interminable evenings of T. C. Murray and Lennox Robinson, a second dramatist arrives—Paul Vincent Carroll. Not that he's the only interesting playwright working for the Abbey; Teresa Deevey wrote a

good play in *Katie Roche*, and Denis Johnston, if he can rid himself in time of the delusion that he is Pirandello plus, may one day follow up the real promise of *The Moon in the Yellow River*. But Carroll is the best of the three to the present. Incidentally, it is surely more than coincidence that Shaw, O'Casey, and Carroll—all Irish—were all the same age, thirty-five or so, when they began to write plays.

The future remains caressingly vague, but meantime the act of working on a novel gives a wonderful illusion of security. Though far from either, my passion for exactness makes me a better novelist than reporter. All I have in common with Flaubert, though, is a disregard for the calendar. I combine the Frenchman's majestic slowness with the laziness of Frederick Lonsdale, but the result isn't anything like *The Last of Madame Bovary*. Chances are it will be the last of Julian Glen Conders, but even if it kills me I'll finish the thing.

Yours for immortality,

JULIAN GLEN CONDERS

July 8 Spend the morning in bed correcting the typescript *Friday*. of *Bad Manners*. Finish it at four o'clock, and then find that I have forgotten a formal engagement as President of the Critics' Circle to attend the luncheon given to the delegates of the International Theatre Congress by the British Council, with a Royal Duke in the chair. Console myself with the reflection that nobody ought to write a book on bad manners unless he is an authority on the subject!

July 9 The *Daily Telegraph* records my having been *Saturday*. present at the luncheon. In fact my name heads the list of "those present." So what?

July 10 The theatrical week having been more or less a *Sunday*. blank, I have given *S.T.* readers my views on Glyndebourne. Here they are:

This week I am to write an article which, if Mr Beer-bohm had penned it, would be deemed pure gossamer, but which over my name will doubtless be held for vulgar

homespun. In this will be offered fantastic reasons for the solid, unpopular fact of my failure to visit Glyndebourne. Up to this moment I have breathed no syllable against Glyndebourne as an institution, the few wisps of animadversion which have escaped me being directed solely against those who enthuse about Glyndebourne for reasons unconnected with either the country or the music. Since quotation is held for a vice and every reader has a Boswell on his shelves, I shall merely say that the kernel of my objections is to be found in the reasons Johnson alleged for the popularity of the Pantheon.

But I feel that I should now answer a letter from Bere Regis, which says: "Dear Mr Agate—*Why* worry about what takes other people to Glyndebourne? Tell us what keeps you away!" Two things keep me away. The first is that I happen not to care for Mozartian opera. I was brought up on Mozart. Before I reached my 'teens Gustave Garcia, grandson of the great Garcia for whom Rossini wrote "The Barber of Seville," having sung a Mozart aria in my mother's drawing-room, turned to me and said: "My boy, the embellishments you have just heard you will never hear again; they are my Aunt Malibran's." The talk at our Sunday dinner-table centred for years in Malibran and Pasta, Rubini and Lablache, Mario and Grisi, Giuglini and Ronconi. I spent years hearing how Tietjens cantilena'd and Trebelli cavatina'd. But time was getting on, and somebody in the *Saturday Review*, who signed himself J. F. R., was exciting young interest in an operatic tale of Cornish passion set, he averred, to wildly exciting music of a new order; interest also in another opera, which seemed to be four operas, about a Ring.

"Gentlemen," an American film-magnate is supposed to have said to some reporters, "you will like my new film. It is superb; it is grandiose; it is *mediocre*!" Shall I confess that in comparison with what I was reading of the superbities and grandiosities of the new orchestration the thin stream of Mozart's formal passion held for me an interest which was not even mediocre? Then came some touring opera-company's performance of "Tristan," about whose composer the Old Guard said what I now think about Hindemith. But to a young man "Tristan"

was very heaven, and after the Love Duet the nursery passion of "Voi che sapete" just didn't move him any more.

On n'est pas sérieux quand on a dix-sept ans
Et qu'on a des tilleuls verts sur la promenade . . .

wrote Rimbaud. And I translate:

One is not critical at seventeen
When Wagner surges at the Promenades . . .

And what a tide it was, filling young ears as, in the Mendelssohn, the waters used to fill Fingal's Cave! Then came Strauss, with all his tremendous theatre of "Salome" and "Elektra," and the din, or, as we should say to-day, the super-din of the Symphonic Poems. To turn from such gorgeous obstreperousness to plain tonic and dominant was like asking a boy who has attained to his school XI to return to cricket with a soft ball. Condemn a youth to this, and he will become anti-Don Bradman. I became anti-Don Giovanni.

And so it has continued with me. I know my blind spot and have the grace not to pretend that it is anything else. But while I can sit through a concert of three Mozart symphonies and wish they were four—for my admiration of non-operatic Mozart approaches mania—I have not yet overcome my adolescent conviction about the tunes he put into his operas, that they are the musical equivalent of what Arnold Bennett once said to me about somebody's novels—the reader must imagine the high-pitched drawl and the little pause: "My dear fellow, I think they're—dull."

The second thing which keeps me from Glyndebourne is my firm conviction that a theatre is out of place among dewponds. I do not believe in the mingling of art and nature; I do not hold with reading Joyce's "Ulysses" among Hardy's ewe-leases. Art should know its place and keep it. The most hideous of human faces, says Hazlitt or somebody, would be one which was composed of beauties that don't match. For example, a pair of eyes, one of which should have Nell Gwyn's roguish twinkle, while the other resembled Mrs Siddons's stupendous orb. The worst piece of writing I have ever achieved can be divided into two exquisite halves. I am

describing a practice round with some professionals the day before a great golf tournament :

When we arrived on the green my ball lay stone-dead. Furtively I looked at the quartet on the next tee. Sandy Herd was at his eleventh wagger, Leach was filling his pipe, Mitchell had his back to me, and Duncan—careless fellow—was tying his bootlace. *They had not seen my shot.* At the short fourth, 160 yards, they invited us to go through. Charman put his ball two yards from the pin. My precisely calculated three-quarter iron shot, which was to be pushed into the wind, went exactly six yards. . . .

Cassiobury was looking lovely. I do not know how many leaves Vallombrosa boasted, but Cassiobury in autumn is hard to beat. Not all the course had been swept that early morning, and after driving down a lane to delight the eye of a Poussin or a Claude one putted through medallions of amber and russet lying as thickly on the green as the gold pieces with which Pope Clement offered to cover Lorraine's painting of Esther and Ahasuerus.

That is vile writing. But it is not viler than the pretence that the beauties of Sussex have any kin with the beauties of Mozart or any other composer. Art, in my view, is escape, and the place for Russian ballet is not the empty steppes but the crowded streets. Thirty Pavlovas, Karsavinas, Lopokovas, would look foolish if they were to tiptoe through "Les Sylphides" at Chancetonbury Ring. I once saw "L'Arlésienne" played in the Arena at Arles with Bizet's music, and it was ridiculous. I have heard "Hérodiade" in the Arena at Nîmes, and the stone walls turned the drama into putty. These experiences have made me set my face for ever against any Wotan bawling farewell to Stonehenge. Am I told that Glyndebourne is not an open-air jamboree, that it is as closed-in as a shop? *Tant mieux.* And if it remains a closed shop to me, *tant pis.*

Niagara-like arguments have been poured forth as to why I should attend, if not Mozart, at least early Verdi. As a dramatic critic I am told that I must be interested in what Verdi has done with Shakespeare's "Macbeth." (This is the place to disclaim any intention of trespassing on

Mr Newman's province.) *As a dramatic critic* I am told that I should rejoice in the noble lighting of this opera. Hecate, they hint, comes down like a wolf on the fold, and the chorus is gleaming in purple and gold. Witches abound like anything. To Lady Macbeth has been given a feminine version of "Let me the canakin clink!" And last, the excellences of the plot are adduced. But I have been before these mentors. Quite secretly, as though it had been a vice, I locked myself in a room alone with the wireless and turned it on for the third and fourth acts of an earlier performance.

Vaguely I had imagined that from the colour of the music I should be able to guess more or less where I was in a plot with which I happen to have some trifling acquaintance. How wrong I was! If I must believe my ears Macbeth, in full tide of baritone remorse, could still serenade his lady, unless, of course, it was the tenor Macduff bewailing his pretty chickens and their dam. Whoever it might be was interrupted by something which might, of course, have been Malcolm's army on the march, but was made by Verdi's music to sound like that saturnalia of Italian waiters with which Deauville kicks off for the season. After which, with a couple of short barks, the opera for no reason ended!

Was it for this melodious pot-pourri that I was invited to file my mind? Was it for this mellifluous brouhaha that I was supposed to get into evening-dress immediately after lunch, catch a train in the middle of my afternoon nap, and at Lewes angle for a taxi? (How people get back from Glyndebourne I don't know. Perhaps it is a bourn from which no true-blue Mozartian returns.) And then next day I became possessed surreptitiously of the libretto for this Macbetto, where I found that the scene of the Queen's death and the miracle of the "To-morrow and to-morrow" speech were thus rendered:

Mac. Qual gemito?

Dama. E morta

La regina!

Mac. (pensoso). La vita! . . . che importa! . . .

E il racconto d'un povero idiota;

Vento e suono che nulla dinota!

I once saw a French "Hamlet" which, without the excuse of music, transformed Ophelia's "Where is the

beauteous majesty of Denmark?" to "La reine de Danemark, hein?" followed by a nudge! So with the Italian "Macbeth" in which I found that the colloquy:

Macb. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!

What is't you do?

Witches. A deed without a name.

had been foreshortened to:

Macb. Che fate voi misteriose donne?

Streghe. Un' opra senza nome.

No, I am very much afraid that this op'ra will have to carry on *senza* Giacomo Agati!

July 15 A letter:

Friday.

104 Wigmore Street

JAMES AGATE, ESQ.

London, W.1

18th July, 1988

DEAR SIR,

Will you let a humble colleague express pleasure in your *Sunday Times* article this week by offering two other instances of the French treatment of English literature?

My mother once came upon a quite serious translation of Milton in which "Hail, horrors, hail!" became "Comment vous portez-vous, les horreurs, comment vous portez-vous!"

I myself heard no less a person than Gémier, playing Antony, call on his "Maman" as he died.

Yours sincerely,

H. PEARL ADAM

July 17 A letter from Glyndebourne:

Sunday.

To the Editor of the "Sunday Times"

SIR,—I am being asked by supporters of Glyndebourne to reply personally to Mr Agate's article in your issue of last Sunday.

It would appear that Mr Agate is using his position as your critic to make a personal statement in your paper about our work at Glyndebourne. At least the personal pronoun for the first half of the letter occurs at an average of more than once in each sentence. It may do so in the

rest of the article, but I have not had the patience to make the calculation.

If this is merely a personal statement, showing Mr Agate's opinion as an individual, it is of no importance and need not be answered, but it appears to be written under the cloak of his position as your senior dramatic critic. As such it must be taken seriously.

The position then is that your great journal holds itself responsible for the statement that Mozart's operas are dull; that music—and drama too—should be performed only in towns and should, it seems, not even look for the good sites in a town, but in "the crowded streets" for its theatres. Such a policy in musical—and perhaps theatrical—matters has astonished me.

I met Mr Agate a month or so ago and, believing that he would act in his capacity as dramatic critic of the *Sunday Times*, I invited him to come to Glyndebourne to study, and perhaps criticise, the dramatic aspect of our work. I thought he would be interested to see the work of Professor Ebert. His answer was to express disapproval of our work because he thought that the patrons of Glyndebourne—and perhaps I—were snobs; that Mozart operas were boring, and that he was not at all interested in stagecraft or in lighting. Yet he functioned as a dramatic critic.

However, believing that perhaps he got out of bed on the wrong side on the day on which I met him, I sent him a letter, again inviting him and endeavouring to show him that our patrons were not snobs, but that they came here at some considerable personal sacrifice because they thought it was worth it. To this invitation and lengthy explanation I received no answer until my letter was followed by one from my secretary, asking whether he had received my letter. This elicited a reply, which I venture to quote in full: "It is very kind of you to renew your invitation to Glyndebourne. And I am only sorry that I cannot induce you to believe that I do not care for operatic Mozart."

Apart from this queer incident, Mr Agate is a total stranger to me and to Glyndebourne.

JOHN CHRISTIE

Glyndebourne Festival Opera House
Lewes

My reply :

Anybody who has seen a mounted policeman in Covent Garden must have observed the dowager-like precision with which the glinting, polished charger picks his way through the litter. Taking this as a model I shall pick my way through Mr Christie's letter and answer such part of it as has contact with the articles which provoked this letter. But only such part. Let me go back to the beginning of last Sunday's article. I said that if Mr Beerbohm had penned this, it would be deemed pure gossamer. How many readers perceived anything more than vanity in this conceit? Why the allusion to Max? Because in the early nineteen-hundreds the then critic of the *Saturday Review* delicately blew the gaff about Greek tragedy and its effect on him as a modern playgoer. Twenty years before this the great French critic Jules Lemaitre had written much the same thing about the way he, as a modern Frenchman, was affected by "Œdipe Roi," Jules Lacroix's translation of the Greek tragedy.

Now it seems to me that my argument of last Sunday was a great deal less offending than that of Lemaitre or Mr Beerbohm. For while these maintained that the sea of Greek tragedy had entirely retreated, leaving the modern spectator naked and bored, I did no more than plead that in my 'teens I had been swept away by the tide of Wagnerian and Straussian music-drama, and had never since been able to regain the Mozartian (operatic) shore. I am still deeply moved by the unshakably great art of Greek tragedy, and I have never missed any opportunity of seeing it when it has been of reasonable access. Last Sunday I deplored that I am no longer moved by the unshakably great art of Mozartian opera. What is wrong with saying that after Manet and Matisse that great painter Watteau seems a little *fade*?

That Mr Christie should be astonished at the *Sunday Times* holding itself responsible for my musical pronouncements is surely an understatement. He ought to have been *flabbergasted*, and should ask to be informed as to the relationship between a great newspaper and its contributors. Incidentally, I am not the musical critic of the *Sunday Times*, and my pronouncements upon and about music possess a certain airiness which, I must think,

is denied to Mr Newman. Further, I have not stated that for other people Mozart's operas are dull. A man who has accustomed his palate to brandy may reasonably confess that he has lost his taste for claret. That is not the same thing as a statement that claret is tasteless. Wagner and Strauss have been my dram-drinking. Mr Christie should read that part of my article again.

Next as to my statement that I am "not at all interested in stagecraft or in lighting." Mr Christie's memory betrays him. My words, as near as I can recollect, were: "When I do not care about what is happening on a stage I am not interested in how that stage is lit!" "Macbeth" is more than my favourite Shakespearean tragedy; it is the play of all plays which I admire and revere the most. I would go to see an Irving play Macbeth if the only lighting were a farthing-dip. I do not ask any but the most ordinary stage-lighting for any "Macbeth" which approaches Shakespeare's. But does Verdi's? I did not gather so from what I heard of the opera over the wireless, nor from what Mr Richard Capell wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* for July 9th: "Shakespeare's Macbeth is a tremendous man; Verdi has failed to characterise him as such—the Macbeth of the opera has nothing uniquely his own to express, but is any criminal Renaissance princeling." Cannot I induce Mr Christie to believe that I am not attracted to a Renaissance princeling posing as Macbeth even if, for the lighting, he should hire the Aurora Borealis? Shakespeare wrote:

Light thickens; and the crow
Makes wing to the rocky wood,

and not

Light thickens; and th' electrician
Brings up the blues in his floats.

The ideal lighting for the Banquet Scene is one which should be a happy compromise between the probable lighting of Macbeth's time and enough light to see the actors by. Glyndebourne may have done something more. In fact everybody's insistence that the lighting of this scene is unforgettable suggests that Glyndebourne has done much more. Then, in my view, the less Shakespeareanly has Glyndebourne done! "The time has been that, when the brains were out, the man would die." The time, in

my opinion, will never be when Macbeth, that most imaginative, poetic, and tremendous of murderers, shall be legitimately remembered by the way his chairs and tables were lit.

No! If my friends wanted to get me to Glyndebourne—and for the last month I have lived in fear of being chloroformed and waking up in those stalls!—the proper thing to say was: “Forget Macbeth—forget Shakespeare—come and hear some jolly music!” To adjure me to come because *as a dramatic critic* I should want to see lighting was nonsense. At the best of times, when I am interested in what is happening on the stage, I do not take much stock of lighting, which is an art or craft or device that even Hollywood knows all about.

Lastly, if Mr Christie will look again at my article he will see that it contained no criticism of the actual performances at Glyndebourne—how could it, since I had not been there? It is my personal misfortune that I prefer Shakespeare to Verdi, and associate theatre-going not with orange-groves but with orange-peel.

July 19 At a smart dinner party I am sent in with a
Tuesday. Vivacious Lady who, in Edwardian days, was
on the stage. The following conversation takes
place:

V.L. Tell me, have you been to Glyndebourne?

J.A. I'm afraid not. I hope to go next year.

V.L. (*trying another opening*). Do you go much to the theatre?

J.A. (*amused*). Quite a lot.

V.L. Perhaps you saw that Dreyfus thing at Kew?

J.A. (*who wrote the thing*). I think I remember it.

V.L. I ask because my nephew was in it.

J.A. (*vaguely*). Quite a lot of nephews were in it.

V.L. (*trying yet another tack*). Then there are all the American plays—what do you think of them?

J.A. Excellent. But, of course, the proper place to see American plays is America.

V.L. That's very interesting. My husband is taking me there this autumn. It's my first visit. Have you ever been?

J.A. I was in New York for the first time last summer.

(*Trying to be helpful*) Indeed, I wrote a series of articles about my visit for my paper.

V.L. Really! I'm afraid I didn't catch your name. (*J.A. gives it.*)

V.L. Oh, yes—the *Observer*!

J.A. (*losing patience*). No, madam—the *Horse and Hound*!

V.L. That's most interesting. When my husband and I are in Leicestershire . . .

And it is then easy for J.A. to divert the stream of hunting chatter into talk of harness horses and Ego. . . .

TAILPIECE

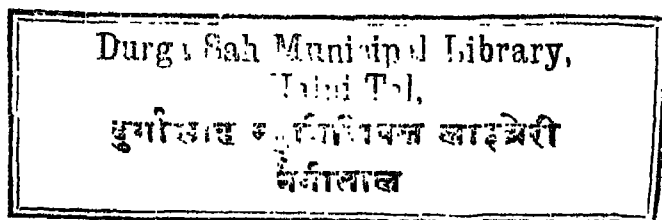
The Mozartians will not let me alone. As this book goes to press I receive nineteen gramophone records, being the Gramophone Company's recording of *Die Zauberflöte*, undertaken for the Mozart Opera Society. They are the gift of Walter Legge. On their receipt I cancel the order for the car which is going to take me to Brighton, and play the lot through. I forget how many hours it takes. As there are 87 sides this means getting up from my armchair 87 times. I shall not do it again.

For me there are two Mozarts. There is Mymozart, the composer of great symphonies and heavenly concertos. In *Zauberflöte* he was responsible for the Overture, Tamino's *Bildnis-Arie*, the March of the Priests, Sarastro's Invocation, Sarastro's "In diesen heil'gen Hallen," Pamina's "Ach, ich fühl's," the lovers' final Duet, and the Chorus of Praise to Isis and Osiris. Then there is another composer called Thymozart, who wrote everything else in the opera, including the Queen of Night's rubbishy acrobatics. I shall keep the Mymozart records, and give away the Thymozart ones! In other words, I like Mozart when his themes are sublime, but not when they are ridiculous, when his mood is tragic and tender, but not when it is comic and trivial, when his genius is nearest to Beethoven and furthest from Sullivan.

Where I cannot follow the out-and-out Mozartians is in

their universal dithyrambus. Here is Legge on the Queen of Night's second aria : " Donna Anna's rage is, by comparison, temperate. The key is D minor—a significant choice with Mozart—and the aria is the most dramatic in the opera, the most dæmonic Mozart wrote. Fury and hate seethe in the first two bars. First the *tremolando piano* on the upper strings, then the *sforzando* on the first beat of the second bar. Throughout the aria there is this violent dynamic contrast which produces an effect like the hissing and spitting of a venomous reptile. Every vocal and instrumental device Mozart had at his command is concentrated on the expression of unbridled hate." Reading this, it seems to me that Legge and I do not use the same language. I hold that Horace Walpole at his least waspish has more sting than this florid lady, and that after Elektra it is nonsense to talk of "unbridled hate and seething fury" in connection with the Queen of Night's roudades. A concert singer who could not put up a better show of temper with her accompanist would never be encored. And there, I think, I must leave the subject.

One passage in the accompanying brochure delighted me extremely. This is Legge's quotation from Seyfried's account of Schikaneder : " What he lacked in cultivation he made up for in sound mother-wit, practical experience and knowledge of stage routine. His audacity was equal to his frivolity, and he found a way out of every dilemma. He was addicted to sensual gratification, a parasite and a spendthrift; and in spite of his large income he was often hard pressed by his creditors." I recognise another portrait here, by the truth of which I abide.



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